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MADALINE

A. MABEL B. FITCH.

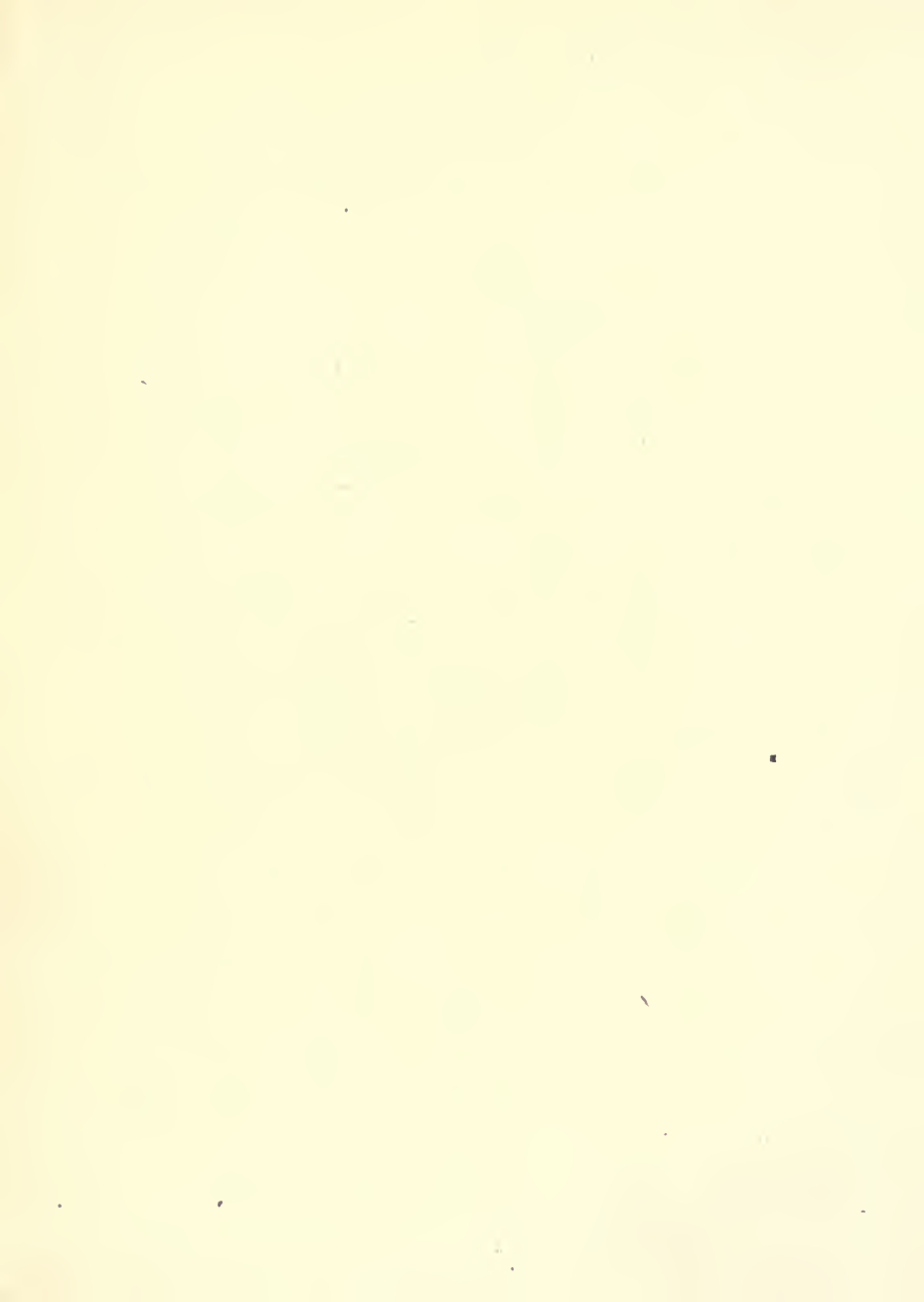


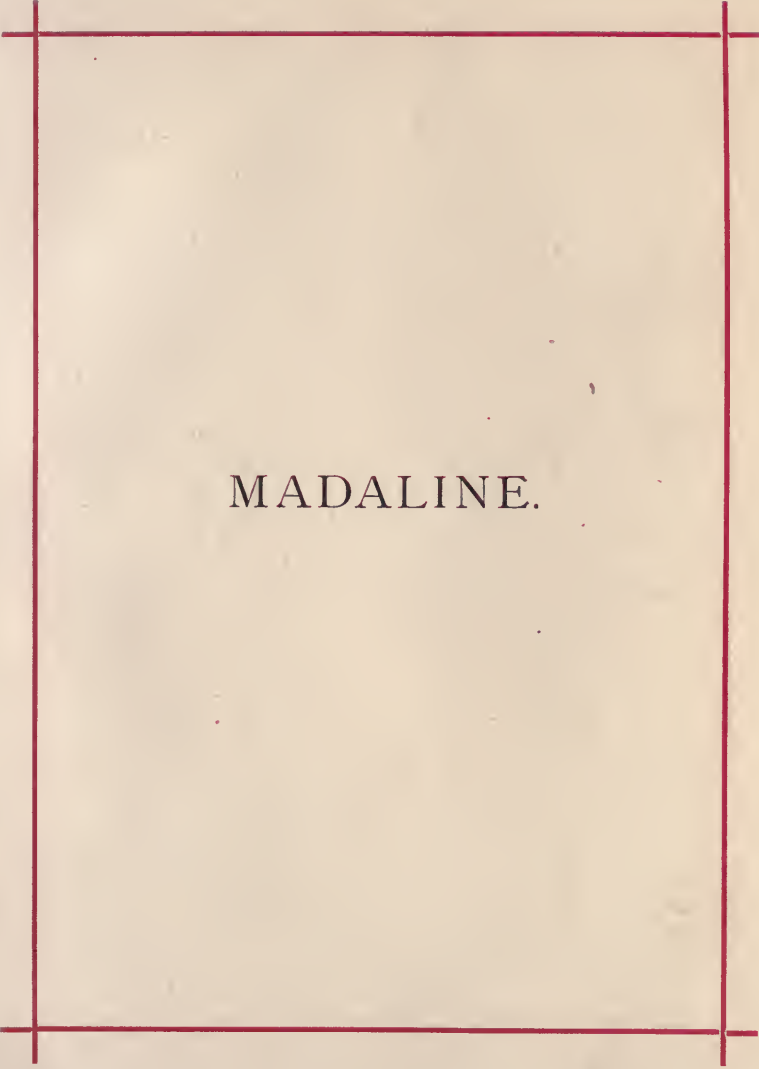
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To Cousin Martha.
With the love of the
Bushes

Dell Rapids, July-1883.







MADALINE.



MADALINE:

A POEM.

BY
A. MABEL (B. LACKMAN) FITCH.

CHICAGO :
HENRY A. SUMNER & COMPANY.
1881.

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1881.

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TO
MR. AND MRS. A. J. BLACKMAN.

TO YOU,

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

WOULD I DEDICATE MY FIRST LITERARY LABOR. I SINCERELY WISH IT
WERE MORE WORTHY YOUR ACCEPTANCE; BUT SUCH AS
IT IS, I TENDER IT WITH MY WARMEST
AFFECTION.



PREFACE.

My Madaline: I've drawn, as best I might,
A portrait of thy character; its faults and all;
With truth's own pencil; making it more true,
Perhaps, than beautiful: few may admire,
And very many, doubtless, will condemn;
Yet, I will trust one here and there may see,
Looking beneath the faulty surface lines,
A spirit they can understand, and love.



MADALINE.

CANTO I.

In trav'ling o'er some western prairie, where
The sameness stretches far as eye can reach,
One now and then comes suddenly in sight
Of lovely, winding valley of a stream ;
Whose silver waters, here and there, he sees
Gleaming among the trees which skirt its banks.
A tiny village nestles closely by ;
With single store, and church ;— or, if no church,
The simple building where the people go
To “meeting,” and the children go to school ;—
And dotting the space beyond the village, are
Farm houses on the thrifty farms, from small
Log cabin, to the more pretentious frame ;
And then the hills, and prairie land, again.

Lonely, and dreary, are these prairie lands,
Even when clothed in purple and the gold
Of regal prairie-queen and golden-rod,—
Or softened by the mild and hazy light
Of Indian Summer. Thus, to the traveller
These cozy valleys real oases seem,
Where in the grassy desert he may rest.

A farmer boy,—these words are sweet to me
And bring a vision of a nature, fresh,
And pure, as are the crystal springs from which
He drinks. Yet, I admit it true,
That there are farmer boys, and farmer boys ;
And that the vicious ones, more vicious seem,
Than those who more than equal them in vice,
But who have learned to gloss their evil deeds,
Until men vice almost for virtue take.
In such a valley as I have described,
And from the little town two miles removed,
On a small farm, in small home, built of logs,

A score of years ago our hero lived.
You never would have known him one, indeed,
Without the telling. His hands were rough with
work,
His clothing coarse, home-made, and often patched,
And on his feet most clumsy covering.
Clodhopper, *you* had doubtless called the boy ;
Alas ! Men judge us by the clothes we wear ;
God, sees the soul, and He would tell you, his
Would shamed nine-tenths of all the souls which
walk
Our city streets, wrapped in the latest mode.
That soul was large, and deep ; yet clear and
calm
As were the eyes from out of which it looked ;
And light, and bright, with lofty, constant
hope.
Despondent clouds no more than cast a shade,
Brief and quick fleeing as the shadows which
Glide so swiftly o'er the Summer fields.

Many years ago, and in the land
Which by our Pilgrim Fathers first was tilled,
Young Zachariah Hamilton had wooed
And won the maiden with the calm, clear eyes,
And open brow, she has our hero given.
And when three birdlings came, whose open mouths
The father found it difficult to fill,
He took his little family and moved
To the more fertile regions of the West ;
Where were more crumbs and not so many birds.
And for a time all went as he desired ;
Until that enemy which ever lurks
About these new made homes to seize its prey,
Fastened upon him, infusing in his veins
Its venom, dread ; whose slow, consuming fire
At last burned up ambition and his hope.
Thus, on the faithful wife fell all the care
And management of their small farm for years.
This little woman was but weak and slight ;
Yet, the amount of labor she performed,

The judgment, and great patience, that she showed.
The statesmanship profound which she displayed
In governing her family of boys,
Were truly marvelous. And now were five,
Who called her mother. All of them were boys ;
Who now for six years had been fatherless.
Our hero was the third, who, at the time
Of which I write, had fifteen summers seen.

By dint of planning and economy,
The products of the farm all gathered in,
And time of rest from farming labor come,
Each Winter saw these boys at district school.
Through all the other eight months of the year
About their home were busy as the bees,—
The mother with true wisdom planning all.
The smallest hands were taught to be of use,
Both in the garden and the house,— the while
The older ones were working in the fields ;
And thus the sum of all their work was much,

While none were ever worked beyond their strength.
True — cheerful labor brings us happiness,—
You had not found a happier home than this
Though searching through the country far and
wide.

And thus had fled the busy years till now,—
Brief, precious years — by them to be enshrined
Among most sacred memories of the past ;
To look upon when tired with the world,—
And bring, 'mid care and struggle, thoughts of
rest.

Bright, manly boys were these five, every one,
Down to the youngest, now but eight years old ;
But Horace, the third son, more than the rest,
Had longing after knowledge of all kinds,
Acquiring it more readily than they.
Although thus young, this boy would never rest
Until he an assertion's *why* had searched,—

And delving first until he found the root,
Outgrowths required, then, no pains to solve.
So in the village school it happened oft,
Young Horace was more capable to teach
His teachers, than they were to teach him.
In consequence, the boy for some time past
Had longed for something more, some real work.
That would require all his energies ;
And thirty miles away, a market town
Boasted an academy for boys—
And could he but go there—the thought was joy !
But then, his mother—he would be leaving her ;
He, who, when all the others had retired,
Lingered to see that naught was left undone ;
Or if, indeed, he could find aught to do,
To make her coming day's work easier ;
Who, in the morning, early as the light,
Was up to build her fire and help her get
The breakfast, ere the others scarce awaked ;
He, who, beside his own allotted work,

Found scores of little things to do through love.
Not that the others, also, did not well,
But he, with finer instinct and forethought,
Anticipated much that they did not ;
And could he leave her, then, and go away ?
He pondered long before he spoke to her,
But at the last came to her with his thought ;
How, but for leaving her, would not delay
To set his feet to climb the mountain high —
And on the side *he* stood — all trackless, save
Here and there the footprint of some man,
Of great and lofty courage, who had dared
To climb the rugged mount, without a path —
This Mount of Knowledge, on whose heights was
space

For grander living, greater deed and thought.
And she, who knew his mind's capacity,
And had in secret also often wished
For this son better opportunities,
Now, when she saw his strength and his desire,

Her faith in him caused her to give assent.
No thought of her, indeed, must hinder him !
Yet, warning him the way was long and rough,
Sharp thorns grew thick, and ever and anon
Some rocky barrier, or swollen stream,
In distance now unseen, would bar his way.
And then he bent and kissed her, with a smile :
“ Ah, mother, dear ! You know that I can swim,
And surely will not mind the scratch of thorns ;
I shall not shrink, from fear to dare and do ;
But, if the heights are difficult to reach,
The greater triumph feel in gaining them ! ”
Thus was it settled he should go from her.

And now my reader asks. from whence will
come
The clothes, the books, this boy will surely need ?
Ah ! had my hero waited but to solve
From whence should come what, from necessity,
He knew he should require, had never gone !

He simply left the will to make the way.
And now one moment let us look at him
While lingering on the threshold of the home,
Absent from which, scarce one day of his life
Has ever passed. He holds his mother's hands —
That mother looking on him with her eyes
Full of great faith and hope and love, and all
Shining through the glistening tears which came,
But did not fall. He has just said to her
That she must never have one fear for him ;
Although he may work hard, is young and
strong.

To which she answers : “ I shall have no fear,
For I can trust you, Horace, and I know
That if so all be right within yourself,
All else is surely right by consequence.”

Wise little woman ! loving, sweet, as wise.
My heart was sad when, late beside her grave,
I wondered if on none her mantle fell.

No engine's fierce, demoniac shrieks as yet
Had caused one rural deity to flee
From that secluded valley's loveliness ;
And nymphs of wood and field still held their sway,
Or one was left in peace to dream they did.
Not e'en a coach came within miles of them ;
But Horace sprang with lightness on the load
Of high-piled sacks of grain ; for this same town
Was market for the products of the farm.
An elder brother with him on the load,
They journeyed all the day, till set of sun,
Ere they descended from the prairie land
Into the cleft, between the high, steep bluffs
Which hem the mighty Mississippi in.
This cleft, a mile in length, the town's main street,
The foot of which the giant river washed,
So narrow was, the space on either side
Was not sufficient for two rows of homes,
But one the other crowded back upon
The hills, precipitous, where they clung,

As, any time might loose their hold and fall.
This, of the town, was all that you could see,
Though, truly, being scarce one half of it.
By carefully exploring, you might find
There was a labyrinth of smaller clefts,
With houses also clinging to their sides,
Which were but reached by long, steep flights of
stairs.

The boy now there — what next does he propose?
Can he have come without some well-defined
Plan of procedure, in his rash, young mind?
Rash it may be ; and yet, methinks it true
He, who would win Success, at first must woo
Her with determination strong as life,
To let no obstacle prevent his suit ;
And this determination Horace had,
And this was all, save his belief that 'mong
The many people of this town, were some
Who, in return for faithful work, would give

The necessary food by which to live,
Yet leave him time his studies to pursue.
But, what means take to find if this were true?
Leaving his brother continuing his way
With the farm-treasures to the market-place,
For two long hours, he went from door to door,
And, in that time, he his first lesson conned
In that distasteful volume, called "the World."
This knowledge, still, not half so bitter was
To Horace, who was true philosopher,
As to a nature keenly sensitive,
Whose tender sensibilities receive
From every unkind word, or look, a wound
Sharp as a dagger-thrust is to the flesh.
And yet, our Horace, in his first surprise
At seeing some door rudely close on him,
Ere scarce he had his simple question asked ;
Or saw an amused smile but ill concealed,
As some at his apparel cast a glance ;
(His best, well kept and neat, but grown too small,

Making his hands and feet too prominent)
This boy who wore his coarseness in his clothes
But kept his soul refined, 'tis true, at first,
All this felt keenly, and would turn away
With hot flushed face, drawing up so straight
He would have measured taller by an inch.
He asked no favors, would accept of none,
And wanted naught for which he could not give
Its full equivalent. He had but asked
A civil question, which, of right, demands
From all, a civil answer in return.

And on from door to door our hero went,
The while the gloaming deepened into night,
Until a lady with a heavenly face
(So Horace thought) said such a boy as he
Was just the one they had been looking for.

We need no longer closely follow him ;
It is the starting that is difficult ;
*

When horses have a heavy load to draw,
So they but start the wheels, can draw the load,
With steady effort, even up the hills.
A boy upright and true will not lack friends,
And Heaven e'er helps him who helps himself.
And now is left for us but to observe
How this young Horace such advancement made
As to surprise both teachers and his friends ;
(We prize whate'er it costs us pains to get ;
Thus did this boy apply himself so well
He with *less* talent must have won success.)
And as the years went by and he at length
Passed on with honors into college life,
How proud the mother and the brothers grew
Of Horace's learning and more cultured air ;
How he, with all his work, still found the time
To send them little tokens of his love,
And loving letters filled with all he did ;
(O, boys, away from home, write oftener !)
How, through his teaching, both the younger boys

Grew thoughtful of their mother as was he,
Which made it far less hard to be from her ;
And grown a man, complete in college lore,
How he with his first earnings built a home
Of larger size upon the little farm.
With all that architect could well devise,
Of comfort and convenience, for the one
Whose sweet smiles of approval would alone
Have fully recompensed for years of toil.
Grown larger, true, but we can plainly see
The boy we knew, was father of the man ; -
In noble independence still the same ;
And with so much of moral dignity,
He scorns to use your servile policy,
And having breathed pure country air so long,
The masks the world puts on would smother
him.

This self-made Horace we may liken to
A beautiful and noble forest tree,
Which has been left to grow its own true form ;

Not pruned to some conventional, stiff shape,
But full of its own native strength and grace.

And now, twelve years from time we saw him first,
We leave him in the West's metropolis,
A rising lawyer, of whom people say,
Seeing his talent and his manly strength :
“This man may bend the bow and take high aim ;
The arrow will not fall below the mark.”



CANTO II.

Around the great Queen City of the West,
On every side, excepting where is spread
The vast, blue waters of Lake Michigan,
Lie pretty towns and villages,—scattered about her
Everywhere, like little children that have
Ventured from their mother's side, and yet
Are careful that they keep her well in sight.

Of all these lovely towns not one can boast
More charming site than that of fair Bellevue.
The land here lies some fifty feet, or more,
Above the level of the lake. Ravines,
Deep, picturesque, and beautiful,
With nature's primal wildness on them still,
Divide such perfect building sites as leave

Small room for art ; while all are set in groves
Of fine old forest trees, where you may leave
All human life behind, and wander there,
Alone with Nature,— and with Nature's God.

In ample grounds, whose gently falling slope
Abruptly ends in seven terraces, which lead
Down to the water's edge, of rough hewn stone,
With towers rising castle-like, and grand,
Among, and against a background of dark
trees,

Stood the fine country seat of Judge LeRue.
It looked to one a very paradise,
Reposing sweetly in the softened light
Of this fair Autumn day of which I write ;
'Twas one of those most lovely, perfect days,
Which only fair October e'er can boast ;
A day for dreams ; soft, beautiful and bland ;
And lightly wrapped in haze, all things asleep,
As though they swooned, in very ecstasy.

Royal October ! Her sisters of the Spring,
Sweet, fresh young things, 't would not be hard to
love,

Are, ne'ertheless, a trifle immature,
While those of Summer, radiant, dazzling all,
Do, by their very brightness, weary one.
Not so, this perfect month ; although arrayed
In the most tender, gorgeous loveliness,
Yet, artful beauty that she is, has learned
That greatest beauty is that half concealed :
So, over all, has drawn a hazy veil.

After a long day's labor in the midst
Of a large city's turmoil, noise and heat,
What deep relief comes to one's weary mind,
When, on the rushing train, is left behind,
Not only all the city's din, but more,
Care, locked safe in, behind the office door,
And what pure pleasure feels when soon he sees
His home appear in sight among the trees,

And hastens with light heart to replace care
With the society of loved ones there.

Thus on this Autumn day did Judge LeRue,
Light-hearted, leave the train to hasten home ;
With him, a guest ; a man, whom, at the first,
You felt to be of nature's noblemen ;
Whom any might be proud to call their friend.
Though still was young, deep thought sat on his
brow,

And in his countenance you saw that he
Had deeply drank of life's experience.
My reader, look more closely at this man.
Is there about him naught you recognize ?
You need but look into the clear, calm eyes,
In which you see revealed his nature's depths,
To know that this is Horace Hamilton.

Their hearts and thoughts in sweet accord, with all
The loveliness about them, these two men

Entered the spacious grounds of Hendrick Hall.
The overhanging branches formed for them
A canopy of crimson and of gold,
In which the little leaves array themselves
As if for final triumph, ere they fall.
And flying down the winding, gravelled walk
And crying "Papa's come," two pretty girls,
The merry little daughters of the Judge,
Came to meet them — Lola and Estelle.
One clinging to the hand of each, they thus approached
The stately entrance of this home, where stood,
Having but just dismounted from her horse,
One hand upon his neck, her face aglow
And dark eyes bright with recent exercise,
The eldest daughter, queenly Madaline,
The best beloved of all. Her riding dress,
Of cloth of darkest blue, revealed the grace
And beautiful proportions of a form
Which country air and sports had perfected.

This, with a rich complexion, not impaired
By being from exposure slightly browned,
A mouth both sweet and loving, with the lips
Bright with the color perfect health can give,
Completes the picture of the outward dress
Of the real self of Madaline LeRue.

She greeted Horace with a beaming smile,
Full of the real pleasure that she felt ;
But far too friendly frank to come from more
Than loving friendship, that she might have given
A noble, elder brother, dearly loved.
And he? Since the first time he met this girl,
Ere she had blossomed into womanhood,
And whose young nature, even then, he felt,
Held all the elements of tragedy —
A nature, passionate, yet with a heart
Almost pathetic in its tenderness —
Feelings which, by their fine intensity,
Might give in sinless world exquisite bliss,

But, in a world of sin and pain, alas !
Would as acutely feel the pain instead,
Since first he met, felt strangely drawn to her,
With a protecting love, as if, indeed,
He would his stronger arms about her keep,
And from the dread, black shadows of the
world

Direct her gaze above them, to the light.
And this protecting love, half fatherly,
Increasing with the years, had now become
Strong, deep and tender, as his own rare soul,
The beautiful, true love such men can give.
(The love one gives, be sure, will ever be
Fashioned in the image of himself,
And noble, or ignoble, like the man.)
But both his sense of honor and his pride
Caused him to keep the secret of his love,
Till, might as social equal ask her hand.
And though that time had come, he yet delayed
To speak of it ; she still was very young,

And, dreading to lose all, could not just yet
Decide her trusting friendship to disturb.

But let us look more closely at the life
And character of Madaline LeRue.
This character may seem unnatural,
And was formed, true, of strong, contrasting traits ;
While, in the truest sense, she ever was
As queenly in her mind as in her form,
She was as simple-hearted as a child —
Almost as wayward and impulsive, too.
She oft was thoughtful, pensive, even sad ;
Yet, when she laughed, it was so genuine,
And came with such directness from the heart,
It made one merry but to see her mirth.
She would grieve and tremble at a worm in pain ;
Yet, in herself, had great strength to endure.
She was sensitive, and wounded easily ;
And yet, with eyes afire and cheeks aglow,
Another's right could bravely vindicate,

With all the courage of a heroine.
She had a high, proud spirit ; yet, she bowed,
Humbly and low her head, instinctively,
When in the presence of the good, or great.

E'en when a child, she often with her father sat,
To question him of life, and death, and all
The grave, perplexing problems wisest men
Have racked their brains, and all in vain, to solve.
In lighter moods, it oft was her delight
To climb upon his knee and hear him tell
How Anaximines conceived the stars
Nailed up against the sky for ornament,
And others, burning stones, celestial fires,
And even holes cut through the vast blue dome
For breathing places. And then he would tell
How ancient nations worshipped many gods,
And give their names, and tell to her the myths,
Those wonderful, strange stories of these gods,—
Which different minds interpret different ways ;

As moral attributes, or Nature deified,
Or confused memories of other times,
According to the pattern of themselves.
(Thus may, in anything, a lovely soul
Reflect its own exquisite loveliness,
Investing things with beauty not their own —
As one sweet writer does “Old Mother Goose.”)

▼

Her childish mind prepared, it is not strange
She had a taste for history, and longed
To read all these things for herself, and thus
But natural, at nineteen years of age,
This Madaline possessed a goodly store
Of knowledge of the nations of the earth ; —
Their rise and fall, their customs, manners, arts,
From prehistoric down to modern times.

Seven years before, when Madaline was twelve
And Lola was a babe, her mother died ;

And since that time an aunt had lived with them,
To take charge of their home, and be to them
A second mother ; and so she ever proved,
Or rather that to Lola and Estelle.
But Madaline, although she dearly loved,
Her stronger nature could not satisfy ;
So she turned to her father ; thus it was
The bond of love between them was so strong.
Thus, too, that in the evening, if he went
To study or to work, he welcomed her —
Indeed, would miss her if she did not come,
As though he lacked a holy presence near ;
So in the library, which was his study, too,
She spent much of her time when in the house ;
So much, in truth, that if one chanced to ask,
“Where’s Madaline?” the likely answer was,
“She’s doubtless in the study with her books.”—
And, truly, ne’er could wisdom’s votress wish
A fairer temple where to minister ;
The books looked down on her like loving friends,

From cabinets of ebony and gold ;
And pure white statues, every one of which
She had invested with a living soul,
Were company so sweetly still and calm,
She felt more peaceful for their presence there.
A window, deep, formed one side of the room ;
In Summer hung with airy draperies,
Where one looked out upon the lovely lawn
And seeming boundless waters of the lake.
In Winter, the great window and arched doors
Were draped with heavy damask, crimson lined,
And a bright and ruddy fire in the grate
Poured wealth of light and splendor over all ;
And over Madaline, who sat intent,
With just a slight contraction on her brow,
Upon some heavy book, which would be deemed
More fitting to her father's age than hers ;
For rarely are Minerva's votaries
Both young and fair ; and, indeed, Madaline
Loved truly many things beside her books :

She loved her father dearly, as we've said,
Her sisters dearly, and half motherly,
And all her friends with deep devotedness.
Even the animals about the place
Down to the little kittens in the barn
Attested she loved them, by loving her.—
And,—Heaven help you, Horace,—there is one,
Since last you came, whose step doth make her
heart

Beat faster, and a brighter color steal
Soft o'er her face, and deepen in her lips,
And fills her eyes with mystic tenderness.
Ah! these are signs of love! that love divine
(Divine, though some debase it down to Hell,)
Which raises us in nature to the gods!
Where, for a time, we do partake with them
Of nectar and ambrosia, heavenly food,
Which, if man were allowed to freely eat,
Might make him, too, a god. Not so, alas!
Psyche must wander long, and much endure

And overcome, before she can be thought
Worthy to be immortal bride of Love.
But oh, that Psyche ever should mistake
Such common men for Cupid's divine self!
But so it is ; we from our higher selves
Do ever form our heroes and our gods ;
And when young, ardent souls awake to love,
Little matters it by whom awaked ;
Enveloped in their own heart's overflow,
They will one's very faults as virtues see,
As surely as Titania, when her eyes
Were blinded by the arts of Oberon.

Yet, Madaline's cultured lover, Edward Vaughn,
Was one whom all the world called suitable ;
An only son, whose family could boast
Their ancestry, their prestige and their wealth.
He had been educated with great care,
Was a lover of the Arts, had travelled much,
On every subject could converse with ease,

In brief — æsthetic, polished and refined ;
An elegant *dilletante*, but no more,—
He had no high, no universal grasp,
But rather was like architecture, where
We look for grand effect, but, with regret,
Find it all lost in infinite details.
The cloth of gossamer is beautiful,
And made of silk ; but then, you know, for
wear,

We'd choose a heavier fabric, taking one
In which the threads had been less finely spun ;
E'en silk, if drawn too fine, will lose in strength.
And Madaline was the stronger of the two :
Doubtless, in part, because her father's mind —
A mind that was far-reaching, broad and deep —
Had influenced hers ; and, partly, that she was
True child of nature, and from nature's breast
Had drawn divine, life-giving nutriment.
And then, again, she had been left to choose
The studies she preferred ; and, guided by

An instinct sure, had chosen mental food
The best adapted to her growth of mind.

Oh, guardians of children, have a care !
Put not their minds in beds Procrustean !
Like that most cruel tyrant, who, 't is said,
Had two beds made of iron, one large, one small,
And all tall men, who came within his reach,
Compelled to lie upon the smaller couch,
Cutting off their limbs, to make them fit,
While on the larger one, small men would put,
And cruelly stretch their bodies to its length,
So do most parents use their children's minds,
Becoming tyrants through their ignorance.
If one be born a poet, his friends will,
Nine cases out of ten, tell him he is
Weak-minded, sentimental, or a fool —
In actions, certainly, if not in words —
Thus cruelly cutting all his fancies off,
To make him fit some practical, cramped bed ;

While, on the other hand, we've known of those
Who'd have their children great in Heaven's spite,
And take a son of mediocre mind,
Who might make first-rate merchant, or a smith,
And try to stretch him till he reach the length
Of some one learned profession. We will say
That they succeed, and he in time becomes —
Well, fourth-rate lawyer. What then? Think you,
In truth, that poor, racked thing will ever be
As well and strong as though they'd put him in
A bed that fitted his capacity?



CANTO III.

In wedded life, if happiness be found,
A man must be superior to his wife,
In knowledge, not alone, but depth of thought,
And capable to guide, as to protect.
A woman is, by nature, womanly,
And leans instinctively upon some one
She finds has strength enough to bear her up.
And, if she find one wise enough to teach,
Will sit a loving learner at his feet,
As Mary did at Christ's. We often find
Those *called* strong-minded, *not* so, really.
They may be so, in sooth, to weaker minds
(Quality is by comparison alone)
And at the very time, may charming seem,
Either to peers, or their superiors.

Weeks have passed by since that fair Autumn
day

When Horace was a guest at Hendrick Hall ;
And since that time, alas ! how changed he feels —
Unlike his former self, as that fair day
Is to this drear December's wintry cold.

When to the city Horace had returned,
The image of fair Madaline engraved
Deeper than e'er before upon his heart,
He found a letter there awaiting him,
Apprising him that ill his mother was ;
And he, in quick alarm, had hastened home
To find there was no hope that she could live.
Too weak to often speak, her eyes' soft light
Yet beamed intelligence and love on him
During the little time she lingered yet ;
And, night and day, was Horace by her side,
As though some opportunity might lose,
To minister to one so dearly loved.

And, when two weeks, from time he came, passed
by,
She, giving this loved son her latest smile,
So closed her eyes for ever on the world.

Soon after his dear mother's death, and while
Wearied and worn with watching and with grief,
A letter came to him, from Judge LeRue,
Telling him his daughter Madaline
Was now betrothed wife of Edward Vaughn,
And adding : "I had sometimes dared to hope
To your strong arms I might entrust my child ;
But as young love goes wheresoe'er it lists,
Fathers must force themselves to be content."
And now brave Horace felt the world a blank,
With not one thing left worth the living for ;
And for a time, both body weak and mind,
He seemed to feel the stupor of despair.
But yet, not long, before his spirit roused,
And leaving home, which, with his mother gone,

Could never more to him seem home again
Returned into the world and to his work.
And though he now had found the world contained
So sad a thing as unrequited love,
(Truly, far sadder than is buried love,
Where yet we may have leave to plant our flowers
And water them, as we may list, with tears.)
No selfish sorrow e'er should blight his life —
Albeit, might forever sadden it.
But life was not so long, indeed, that one
Could not afford the pains to live it well,
E'en though it were not crowned with happiness.
And far as lay his power, so should the world
Be made the better for his having lived.
Yet, Horace e'er must feel for Madaline
The tenderness now grown a part of life —
Wife of another, near to him, or far —
And from his distance still watch over her,
That so, perchance, the time should ever come
She needed him, he might be there to help.

And she, the one who had unwittingly
Thus mixed his cup of life with bitterness,
Meanwhile was dreaming her first dream of
love ;

Yet finding it a restless dream, in truth,
As all dependent, yet aspiring souls
Will find, who try to lean on lesser strength,
Thus constantly thrown back on their own hearts.
An ivy will, instinctive, seek to climb,
Although it has not strength to rise alone ;
But, if so be a tree or wall be near
To lean upon, will rise to height of it,
E'en while it clings to it for its support.
And this aspiring, clinging Madaline,
Most surely was an ivy, meant to rise
To lofty height ; and planted by the side
Of some grand castle, or cathedral wall,
Would twine its grace and beauty over it ;
But she was young, and did not even know
Her nature's tendencies, or her own want.

Soon after their betrothal, Madaline
And Edward Vaughn were talking by themselves ;
She, rather, listening to him as he
Recounted memories of various things
Beheld while travelling in foreign lands,
Until his discourse led him, finally,
To speak of modern, then of ancient Greece.
From the attentive, yet half dreamy look
With which she had been listening to him,
A sudden flame, both radiant and intense,
Lighted her face and burned in her dark eyes,
As though she were some youthful prophetess ;
And she exclaimed, "O, Edward ! I could wish
That I had lived in those heroic times,
To have been a Theseus, or a Hercules !
And might have fought like them against the great,
The monsters horrible, which preyed on man !
And, were I not a woman, even now,
There are Hydra-headed evils which to fight !"
She stopped, abashed, for on her lover's face

Was a displeased look she never saw before,
Which quickly quenched the enthusiastic flame,
(Save only in her cheeks) and like some child,
Before the look her eyes fell timidly.

And then her lover coldly answered her :

“Such high flown thoughts are folly, Madaline.

I know that women think, if they were men,

They soon would bring the Golden Age again.”

And then he, seeing her so penitent,

More gently said : “I would not wish my wife,

Instead of gathering flowers by the way,

To be forever reaching for the stars.”

But Madaline was grieved. She was a flower

That could not bear the chilly winds of blame ;

Indeed, her beautiful, free growth owed much

To the sunbeams of appreciative love,

Which she had always in her father found.

And she was deeply grieved. She had not thought

This sudden flame, which sprang up from the
depths

Without her bidding, firing all her soul,
Could be a thing for censure ; and to have
It come from one who loved her, and to whom
She was to look for guidance all her life,
Perplexed as well as disappointed her.

Seven weeks ago, with calm and happy hearts,
Horace and the father of loved Madaline
Entered the spacious grounds of Hendrick Hall.
As Judge LeRue now enters them alone,
The strange, unwonted pallor on his face,
Must be reflection of December's snow !
Not so. For many days, a heavy cloud
Has threat'ningly been hanging o'er his mind —
A dark cloud of foreboding and suspense —
For Panic is abroad in all the land,
Devouring greedily, without respect
Of person or of class, alike the poor
Man's pittance and the substance of the rich ;
And, on this day, back to his lovely home

And loved ones there, returns a ruined man.
Prosperity's sun will doubtless rise again,
But only shine for him on shattered hopes.

Some years before this time of which I write,
He had been urged by many friends, to act
As one of the directors of a bank..
He had long time been Judge ; was widely
known,
And, unlike many of our public men,
The better known, the more was felt to be
The soul of honor and integrity ;
And he consented, on the urgent plea
The people would have confidence in him,
And swelled the assets with his property,
But to the others left the management ;
And they seemed men of honor, every one.
They might have been, and but in judgment
lacked.
It might have been nobody's fault at all

That caused men's faces suddenly to blanch,
While white lips almost shrieked, "The Bank has
failed ! "

Her father had with strength herculean
Drawn o'er his face the curtain of a smile ;
But Madaline's tender love was not deceived.
She saw his pale and haggard face, alarmed,
And quickly spoke : " Dear father ! what is it ?
Something has happened you, or you are ill ! "
" I truly am not well," he but replied.
" And I need rest and quiet. I will go
Now to my room, until the dinner - hour."
And Madaline kissed him tenderly and urged :
" Can I do nothing for you, father, dear ? "
To which he answered, as he turned away :
" Nothing at all. I wish to be alone."

When Judge LeRue his daughter left, she felt
The great oppression of some coming ill ;

But she must dress for some expected guests,
And had no time to entertain sad thoughts.

One, seeing Madaline first time, this night,
Her toilet so complete in everything —
From silver comb in her dark hair, worn high,
To pretty slipper — all, so suiting her,
Might well have thought she had herself sur-
passed.

But Madaline's own rare, instinctive taste
Prompted her, unerringly, to choose
Always just that best suited to herself.
Indeed, in all she did was plainly seen
Th' exquisite artist-touch ; and it was this,
Perhaps, as much as her rich beauty, which
Made her everywhere acknowledged belle.

The most of her guests knew what she did not.
Bad news, you know, has wings, and swiftly
flies ;

And she, a gracious hostess, yet, to-night,
Surprising, more than once, unusual looks,
Looks half triumphant or whole pitiful,
Which quickly roused all her defensive pride,
Carried herself a little haughtily ;
But they left early, and, with deep relief
It was that Madaline saw the last depart ;
And then she stood in the large rooms alone,
Longing to seek her father, and to know
What trouble dire was preying on his mind,
Which he refused to let her share with him.
She knew the mysterious glances she had seen
Must somehow have connection with his grief,
And her suspense was growing terrible.
For an hour or more, like some caged animal,
She paced the lengthy parlors up and down,
All silence, save the rhythmic sound with which
Her soft dress swept the richly-covered floors ;
Then, suddenly she raised her head, and went
Straight to her father's room, and gently tapped,

And, in a pleading voice said : " Father, dear,
Please let me in! Oh, please, do let me in !
This terrible suspense I can not bear."
He opened then the door, without a word;
And she quick threw her arms about his neck,
And said with quivering lips : " You doubt my
love,
To think I would not gladly share your grief,
Whate'er it is." And then he told her all —
How even their home must be, too, given up.
He would not save it, if he could ; but all
Should go, that much as possible might be
Returned to the depositors of the bank,
Many of whom, perhaps, but for his name,
Had never thought of placing money there.
It was not for himself he had endured
This agony of mind. It was the thought,
His children dear, so very dear to him,
Should be thus brought to sudden poverty.
Then, Madaline's noble spirit fully roused.

Like Maid of Saragossa in the breach,
She stood heroic, without thought of fear,
And faced the foe. The brightness to her eyes,
And color to her cheeks, had all returned.
Her voice was firm, though tender, when she
said :

“Dear father, many years ago you said
My soul was yet an undeveloped thing,
Like baby robin, little else than mouth,
Wide open always, craving for more food.
And then you smiled down in my face and said,
With such an appetite and proper food,
I ought, in time, to grow a goodly bird —
A bird with strong and well-developed wings.
I truly feel full-fledged and strong, to-night ;
And so, my father, dear, you must not grieve.
I ’m very sure that I can learn to work ;
I e’en could suffer all, for your dear sake,
And in that suffering rejoice !” And with these
words

She knelt beside the chair in which he sat,
And taking up his hand in both of hers,
She pressed it to her lips. With filling eyes,
In turn he placed the hand upon her head,
And murmured low : "God bless you, Madaline."



CANTO IV.

As in the Summer all the trees are fair
When covered by the graces of their leaves,
And we do not their real outlines see,
But, when their foliage falls, and bare they stand,
Their forms sharp-drawn against the wintry sky,
We find some still are fair, but many more
Unshapely and with large excrescences,
So 't is with men. In their prosperity,
The graces of conventional life may hide
Most grave defects, or characters deformed,
Which we espy but when misfortune comes
And leaves their real selves in bold relief.
Had not misfortune come to Madaline,
The nearest ne'er had known her character,
How fair it stood against adversity,

In delicate, yet firm, clear tracery.
Some may complain she's lost her gentleness,
And has grown cold and proud ; but you must
know,

In Winter branches grow less pliable ;
For, 't is the law of nature, when the frosts
That blight and winds that chill have come, the sap
Of all the plants will hasten to the roots,
And more unfeeling leave the exposed parts,
Lest blighting frost and chilling wind should kill.

Far from the city's heart, and where, indeed,
The houses seem but hanging by her skirts,
Behold a row of small white cottages,
With dreary stretch of prairie land beyond.
We will invoke the aid of fairy's wand,
And, thus invisible, will enter here
The new and humble home of the LeRues.
How bright and cheerful ! What sweet, homelike
air !

One well might fall in love with cottage life.
A glowing fire burns upon the hearth,
For, though the Summer's reign is scarcely
o'er,
E'en now the Winter's breath is sometimes felt,
As now and then he turns his face our way.
The fire's glow lights up the pretty room,
Pretty and bright as any one could wish,
Though, save the fine piano and guitar,
There 's not a thing but of the simplest kind.
But Madaline's taste has made all beautiful.

But through that open door, who is 't that lies
So prone and motionless upon his bed ?
Oh, can it be that this is Judge LeRue ?
Why should, while useless vessels sail the main,
This noble craft lie wrecked upon the shore ?
Some one bends over him and smooths his hair,
Adjusts the snowy pillows for his head,
Draws up the counterpane, lest he be cold,

With tender, loving touch. But now she turns.
My God ! and can this be the Madaline
We knew, less, somewhat, than a year ago ?
Ten years should not have made such change as
this,
So sink the eyes, and pale the cheeks, and leave
That tired, care-worn look upon her face !
Dear Madaline ! Who 'd know you now — so
changed —
With half the luster of your eyes washed out
By frequent tears ? and who will love you now ?
The little girls, now sitting on the floor
And dressing up their dolls to take them out,
Are much the same as when you saw them first —
Too young to feel the blow, or know the care,
That changed their father and their sister thus,
The roses on their cheeks are near as fresh
As when you saw them in their lovely home.
They, doubtless, are as happy, though they 've
learned,

Since the illness of their father, to speak low
And to move quietly about the house.

But where was Madaline's lover all this while ?
He was away when first he heard their loss,
But hastened back to urge on Madaline
His name and home ; and, too, he would be glad
To help her father in all ways he could ;
Or both he and the girls could live with them —
With just a slight reluctance in his tone,
Which, Madaline, grown doubly sensitive,
Resented quickly in her heart, and said
She knew her father ne'er could be obliged
To any living man for daily bread ;
And she, his daughter, could not leave him yet.
So Edward Vaughn was forced to be content,
Although displeased to see his future bride
Descend to humble life, refusing still,
Gently, yet firmly, all his proffered aid.
They would need little, she had said to him ;

Would want but comfort, and not luxury,
And surely from no one they needed help.
But as time passed, he one day learned that she,
In music, for some time, had lessons given,
Which angered him ; and when he went again
To visit her he had upbraided much,
Saying that if she cared not for herself,
That, as his promised wife, might think of him.
He would not have her turn a servant quite.
To gratify some strange, Quixotic whims !
Through sorrow, Madaline was growing proud.
She drew herself up haughtily, and took
From off her finger the engagement ring,
And handing it to him, said, "You are free."

Had Madaline ever truly loved this man,
That she could break this tie so easily ?
No ; I deem not ; for here you can but see
Her pride was stronger than the love she bore,
And Madaline's real love was strong as life

And deep as worship is. She 'd older grown
And keener sighted since the time when she
Had promised to be the bride of Edward Vaughn.
Against her will, almost unconsciously,
She oft contrasted Horace with this man,
Which made the latter seem but frivolous.
But she was shocked and frightened when she
found
That she was growing thus indifferent,
And tried to force herself to greater love
By magnifying all his virtues large.

He, on his side, not understanding her,
Yet could not help, in some degree, to feel
Her nature's depth and rarity, and loved
Her well as he could love, perhaps ; although
Love to this man was infinitely less
Than love to Madaline. And so it was
That when she gave to him the glittering ring,
He loved her yet too well to give her up ;

And, speaking to her gently, pressed a kiss
Upon her forehead white, then on her lips,
And slipped the ring again upon her hand.

And not long after this, there came a day
When Judge LeRue was brought, insensible,
Back to his little home and Madaline.
It was an apoplectic stroke, they said ;
And for two days and nights, with breaking heart,
Madaline hung over him ; and then
He roused, somewhat, from his unconscious state,
But never was what he had been, again —
In mind and body, but a feeble child.

And where, the while, is Horace Hamilton ?
Is Madaline's sorrow added to his grief ?
Yes. He had returned in time to see
His loved friends brought to sudden poverty
And give to them his noble sympathy.
No one but him, indeed, did Judge LeRue

E'er truly welcome to his humble home ;
And, by no one but him would Madaline,
Now proudly sensitive, e'er be advised ;
And knowing that his presence comfort brought,
He made his visits frequent, it is true,
Which Edward Vaughn saw with deep jealousy.
He saw, too, Madaline revered this man ;
And this, toward Horace, filled his heart with hate.
Upon the day that Judge LeRue fell ill,
They both had hastened to extend their aid ;
And Madaline, Edward scarcely noticing,
Had, with white face and clasped, uplifted hands,
Gone quick to Horace, crying in pleading voice :
"Oh, Mr. Hamilton ! now you are come,
Can you not make my father well again ?"
A childish question, yet pathetic one,
Which showed how, in her thought, she leaned on
him.
And Horace, in the pitying tenderness
He would have felt for e'en dumb animal

That in distress appealed to him for help,
(And how much more must feel for Madaline !)
Took both her hands in his without a word,
And with dimmed eyes looked on her tenderly.
Then Edward Vaughn stepped forward haughtily,
White with the jealous anger that he felt,
And said, while looking sternly on them both :
“ You surely should remember, Madaline,
I am the one to do what ’s possible ! ”

And yet, this Horace, even in a thought,
Too noble was to e’er wrong Edward Vaughn ;
And if there was a living man to whom
Edward might his honor safely trust,
That man was surely Horace Hamilton ;
But, for the happiness of Madaline,
It better was to visit her no more.
And charging her that should it ever chance
Her father should arouse and ask for him,
That she should send for him without delay,

He took his leave of her, which proved to be
The final sight of that dear face for years.
But yet, for many weeks, there passed no day
That Horace did not hear of Judge LeRue,
Through the physician that attended him ;
And learned, alas ! there was but little hope
The father would be different from now,
Though long in this same state might linger yet.
And how can words express the daughter's grief ?
Though I intrude on that grief's sanctity,
And tell you how she wrung her hands, and
prayed :

“Oh ! anything but this ! my God ! my God !
I can bear anything — yes, anything !
So Thou but give my father back to me !”
In vain her cries. Week after week passed on,
And still her father lay as at the first,
And scarcely noticed her, although she hung
About his couch incessantly, and watched,
With lessening hope, for his recovery.

She had cast herself down, prostrate, as it were,
In anguished supplication 'fore God's throne ;
But still He heeded not. What was her pain
To Him, who sat enthroned so high above ?
And so she raised herself, and prayed no more,
But, with a bitter feeling at her heart,
That God was cruel and unjust, she rose
And carried her heavy burden without help.

Of all his sorrow, far the bitterest drop
That Horace drank — indeed, could ever drink —
Was knowing Madaline's deep grief, and he
Deprived of e'en a brother's privilege
Of giving her the comfort that he might.
Truly can she never know how oft
And deep the yearning was, to go to her
As he might to a child that had been hurt,
And without help lay moaning in its pain.
He felt her need, but yet could not intrude.
It was as if the mother of the child

Stood by, and thus precluded other help,
While yet the child moaned on, and she
Incapable, or careless, to relieve.
And this it was more than all else combined,
That fretted Horace's strength and life away,
Till his physician ordered, so he wished
To see another year, that he should leave
All business for a time, and go abroad.

A brave and noble spirit Horace had,
But strength of body one as truly needs,
To bear a heavy burden of the heart.
And nature here had been so overtasked,
She could not rally without change and rest.
And putting by all pride for her he loved,
He sought an interview with Edward Vaughn ;
To ask was there no thing that he could do
Either for Judge LeRue or Madaline.
And coldly Edward Vaughn had answered him :
"The one that in two weeks will be my wife,

Surely needs not the help of any friend.”
And Horace left him filled with wretchedness ;
Though had he felt assured that Madaline
Would with this man find aught of happiness,
His own grief then he better could have borne.
But Horace knew her nature well, and felt
It was impossible, and as he left,
He groaned in bitterness : “ His wife so soon ? ”
And hastened to depart, that he might be
Not even in her country, on that day ;
But when upon the ocean’s mighty breast,
Where he seemed but a little, helpless child,
The turbulence of grief was soothed to rest.
Gazing upon the water’s vast expanse,
Or overarching sky, so filled with worlds,
His soul was over-awed, and grew resigned,
Before the greatness of the infinite.
Why pain and disappointment came to man,
He could not tell ; but man’s Creator knew ;
And was that not enough ? He would believe

That there was loving purpose in our pain,
And to God's care, he surely could entrust
Even his beloved Madaline.
And close on this resignation of himself,
A beautiful, deep peace stole over him.
And not unhappy, Horace journeyed far,
And many countries viewed, and in his mind
Stored various knowledge for the coming years.
And when two years had passed, and somewhat
more,
One morning he, in far off Switzerland,
Reading a paper sent him by some friend,
A poem came upon, signed : "Madaline."
That name beloved, caused him to quickly read,
And ere he finished, he exclaimed : "My God !
This can be none but Madaline LeRue,
Rather, that was — now wife of Edward Vaughn —
Dear Madaline, Heaven help you bear your pain,
For wretchedness, alone, prompts words like
these !"

The poem truly seemed a mortal groan ;
Its cry of anguish pierced his very soul ;
It was as though the suffering of years,
Had into these few lines been all condensed ;
And from behind the simple printed words,
He saw the intense anguished soul look forth,
Of her he had so dearly, deeply loved.
And through long, sleepless nights and heavy days,
Her suffering image ever filled his heart.
And when the frosty heralds had appeared,
Announcing icy Winter's fast approach,
He sought the milder airs of Italy.
But still that suffering image followed him.
And on from place to place, in restlessness,
At length he came one dreary eve, to Rome,
As listlessly he took in hand the pen
To place his name upon the register
It quickly dropped ; for written there, among
The latest names, was "Edward Vaughn and
wife."

He felt himself grow giddy at the thought,
That she, so long not absent from his mind,
Was near to him. 'Twere joy to see her face,
And yet, O, Heaven! how could he bear the
sight?

Still, it were better, if but for the hope
Of finding her less sad than fancy showed.



CANTO V.

Fully determined, now, that Madaline
No longer should refuse to be his wife,
Edward Vaughn, upon the very day
That Horace had his native country left,
Went to her home ; and too, he had some news
To tell her, which he thought might make her
glad.

His well known name, and wealth, 'caused him to be
Named for a seat in Congress in the Fall ;
And when he told her this, he said to her :
“ If my friends work for me but as they should,
Of my election I am very sure ;
And will this please you, dearest Madaline ? ”
And in a listless manner she replied :
“ What makes you happy, Edward, will please me.

But why should much depend upon your friends?"

"My simple Madaline, do you not know,
From President, to pettiest officer,
All are dependent on their friends ; who must
Persuade the ignorant their man is best,
Or buy the votes of the unprincipled,
Who on their glorious right of suffrage trade,
As any other merchandize ; their votes
Being knocked down to the highest bidder?"

In Madaline's voice was a slight ring of scorn ;
Her eyes grew somewhat brighter, as she said :
"Then, none stand on their merit any more ?
And so, to be successful, virtue must
Be mixed with baser metal, as is gold,
Or silver, which alone, would be too soft ?
'Tis true, a silver spoon is easy bruised,
And careless children leave their teeth prints on't ;
For wear we'll find the plated is the best !
And as the real surely looks as well !"

Her lover smiled as thus he answered her :

“Yes, what you say is true, my Madaline,
And that without the slightest irony.
Of little use is virtue unalloyed.
Yes ; even children feel there ’s softness in ’t,
And take advantage of the merely good ;
And so, for self-protection, one must mix
Alloy of shrewdness and of policy,
Or, over harder precepts of the world
But put a shining plate of virtue on.”
She sighed and said : “Oh, Edward, is it so ?
The world so base ? But life is short, and then
It may be God will want to melt us down
To mould us to another shape ; and He
Will surely then reject all but the real.
But tell me not that all have petty souls,
With nought but little thoughts and smaller aims,
Without one noble thought or grand desire !
Are men all dead ? Such creatures are not men —
With mind and soul all narrowed down to self ? ”
Again he smiled at her great earnestness :

“You are too serious, my dear. We find
No instinct truer than self-interest.
We’re too enlightened now to lay great stress
On abstract principles of right and wrong.
Our motto now is, ‘Each one for himself.’
Do lawyers e’er refuse retainer fee
Because convinced their side has not the right?
Do ministers preach that which they believe,
Or that which will most please their audience?
And so, through all professions and all trades,
The right or wrong is good or bad to self.
We take the world but as we find it, dear.
It would be worse than useless for a man
To try to stem the current of a stream.
He can, in wisdom, but float with the tide.
Would you have all Gils Blas, or Don Quixotes,
And come to grief by their vagaries, dear?”
“No,” she replied with warmth; “but I would
have
Men dare to take firm stand for what is right.

And even, if need be, to give their lives
In fighting for the truth ! I yet will trust
There must be some who still believe in them !
Some yet who will not fear to do the right
Because the right is in minority !
Oh, brave, young Phaeton ! I honor thee,
Who, with such lofty courage, dared to drive
The fiery coursers of the sun ! Than lead
A life devoted to base, selfish ends,
I sooner would be one would rashly dare
To drive the coursers of some grand reform !
Albeit, I overestimate my strength,
And thus, perchance, might set the world on fire,
And myself perish in the brave attempt !
It can not be all men have fallen so low,
In Honor's temple they have built a door,
That they, indeed, may not the trouble have
To go through Virtue's temple, to get in !
Dong stand our grand republic ! thus, we cry,
And gaze, admiring, at the temple built

By godlike men, and builded well and strong ;
The style of architecture grand and free ;
Our Pantheon ! dedicated by these men
To all the deities of Right and Truth,
Justice and Liberty, and all the rest.
Then call we the oppressed from every land :
Come ye, from all the nations ! Enter, here,
The sacred temple ; worship, and find peace !
But the statues of these deities *you* show
Thrown down and trampled on by dirty feet,
And mutilated in mere wantonness !
And look ! in central prominence, there is
Whose noble form we 'd take for Liberty !
But that pure marble breathed but purity —
And this is wanton made by garish paints
And wide - spread, gaudy drapings, and her name
is License !
If what you say be so, base men are
With the keystones of the arches tampering !
Alas ! alas ! will no one look to it

Till the whole structure topples on our heads ? ”

And Edward, half - contemptuous, then replied :

“ Madaline, such extreme views of right

And wrong will make you wretched all your life.

You peccadilloes magnify to crimes.”

“ Ah, Edward ! there is where the danger lies !

Men do the wrong and do not see 't is wrong.

They look but on the lovely face of vice,

The beautiful Echidna, whose fair form

Terminates in the hideous, slimy folds

Of coiling dragon. They will see nought, alas !

Except her beauty, till they feel her sting ! ”

“ Madaline, you have filled your mind with
thoughts

Of the heroic ages of the world,

Until you lose all sight that nations are

In childhood, when they make so prominent,

Rash deeds of bravery, and take extreme,

Impracticable views. When they have grown

To mental greatness, in short, civilized,

They will in all things take the golden mean.”
“Oh, Edward !” quickly answered Madaline,
“The golden mean oft means but selfish ease !
When nations reach the height of which you speak,
Too oft, alas ! their strength is wholly gone ;
They grow corrupt and die, as Greece, or Rome !
It should not be — I think it *would* not be —
If, on their beings’ high Olympus, there
Were kept a place still sacred to the gods,
For ’t is their moral strength makes nations great ;
But *soul* is left deserted for the *mind*.”

In her excitement, Madaline had risen,
And she had paced the floor the while she spoke ;
Her eyes as bright as old, and cheek, and lip,
With vivid hectic flush burned bright and warm.
Her lover was rejoiced to see the change
Which made her look her former self again,
And tried to draw her to a close embrace ;
But she shrank back, as though afraid, and chilled ;

It was his right, she knew ; and yet, and yet,
Her heart had grown so cold ! oh, if he had,
But once, this night, expressed one lofty thought,
Or grand or noble feeling, then her heart
Might have warmed toward him ! She longed,
for some

Strong spirit's help in this her time of need,
But here, she found no strength that satisfied.
Her lover frowned, as thus she shrank from him
And said : " O, Edward ! let me go ! I fear —
I think — my father may be wanting me !"
With one caress he let her go from him ;
And when she came again, her step was slow,
The sparkle on her face already gone,
And but the listless, tired look again.
Her lover took both her cold hands and said :
" My Madaline, how pale and tired you are !
Our wedding you no longer shall put off,
They say your father may live thus for years,
And this great care is surely killing you !

Your father can be with you, same as now,
But we will have a nurse, and you shall rest."
Thus did he urge, and gently stroked her hair,
As she, with head bowed down, before him stood ;
And then she raised her suffering face to his ;
"O, Edward ! urge no more, it can not be !
Not yet ! not yet ! Oh, give me time ! perhaps,
I can not tell, I may feel different !
I have grown hard and cold ; you now, would take
An icy phantom to your breast, and which
Would chill the very life blood in your heart !"
"The risk is mine, dear Madaline, I know,
With rest, and one to care for you, you would,
Ere long, become your former self again."
"O, leave me, Edward ! leave me to my grief !
My heart is with my father while he lives,
And will be buried with him in his grave !
Forgive me, and forget me, if you can !"
Angry that his persuasions were in vain,
Edward Vaughn stopped not to weigh his words ;

“You are completely blind to your own good !
And now, I wish to say, and once for all,
It shall be now, or never, Madaline !”
Perhaps 'twas well he spoke thus hastily ;
For now, her pride would help her bear the pain,
Which had been almost torture, as she thought
She now was giving up her only friend.
And now that pride gave momentary strength,
And she, the second time, took off the ring
And laid it by him, saying : “Never, then.”
He turned, without a word, and left the house,
But left the ring still shining where it lay,
Which she, next day, sealed up and sent to him.
And thus they wakened suddenly, to find,
'Twas but a dream, no more, but just a dream.

By far, 'twere better that these two should part.
How could one of a self-indulgent soul,
Who thought the true philosophy of life
To bask in sunny places, whence he looked,

Upon the "struggle for existence," with,
Perhaps, some interest, but no sympathy,—
And saw the weaker perish in the fight,
With but the feeling, as he sunned himself,
" 'Tis better so, the fittest will survive." —
How were it possible, for such as he,
To know the deep and tender heart of her,
Who felt another's pain as if her own,—
Was champion of all she fancied wronged, —
And who, with instinct of self-sacrifice,
Had gloried in a martyr's suffering,
For aught sublime enough for which to die?

CANTO VI.

Our public schools ! the nation's pride, and hope !
Success of which, our land has cause to boast ;
And yet, ye guardians of the doors, beware !
For evils are enforcing entrance there !

In a large building, built of dingy brick,
Where, from the upper windows, you behold
The lake's blue waters, find we our heroine ;
Surrounded by small children, full three score,
Who learn from her, first time to hold a pen,
And say their three times six from memory.
And is this lowly work ? Not in true sense :
No work so lowly, but it may be grand,
By workman great enough to make it so,
And whereso'er she be, a teacher, may

Be Heaven's very messenger of light.
'Tis true that Madaline had better liked,
Indeed, for this position had applied,
To hold Instruction's lamp, and let it shine
But on her admired heroes of the Past, —
The heroes great of ancient Greece and Rome —
For which she felt most truly qualified ;
But, without friends at court, this could not be,
And to this humbler place she was assigned ;
But as it was her nature to do well
Whate'er she undertook to do at all,
She was surprised to find, as time went by,
How great became her interest in her work,
While all the children loved her and she them.
Yet constantly this interest was chilled,
And, that it did not die, were marvellous.
The Principal she found both large and tall,
Which probably sufficient reason was
For his assuming a superior air,
For he inferior was in intellect

To more than half of his subordinates,
Of whom the number equalled full a score,
And over whom, than this man exercised,
Never was there more despotic rule
To cause our free America to blush ;
They were the slaves, and *he* the overseer,
Who gloried to find cause, however small,
To bring the heavy lash down on their backs ;
And that, no more from caring for their work
Than pleasure felt in showing them his power ;
Though, truly, for their work he also cared,
For, from their work, it was, he took his praise.

Casting responsibility on them,
He had the time to go from room to room,
To criticise their work with frown, or sneer,
Or oft stand at their doors, with scowling glance,
Like some ferocious, watchful Cerberus,
To whom, *most* there had learned to throw a
cake

Of seeming deference, or flattery ;
But Madaline, poor thing, had thought that she,
By doing right because of right, would thus
Escape this dreaded being's bark and bite !
So, with a feverish haste, these teachers worked,
And many, really, with no higher aim
Than please this man they did not dare offend,
For their positions, to most there, meant bread,
And he the power had, by but a word,
To turn them, any time, into the street.
And thus they worked incessant — and for what ?
To teach these children to lead noble lives,
To be upright and just and true, as well
As learn to write, to "cipher" and to spell ?
In truth, not so ; these teachers were employed
To cram the youthful mind with mental food,
As some do fatten turkeys, or their ducks,
As if, indeed, in feeding these young minds,
No different process could be requisite !
Mistake most fatal ! Any gardener

Might tell you that a plant, whose growth is
forced,

Will never have the strength, or life, of those
Which have been given a longer time to grow.

Instead of this fictitious, hot-house growth,
Give children time to grow, as nature does ;
And give them moral sunshine and fresh air ;
For, if we hope for tender, juicy fruit,
We must not starve the soul to make the mind,
And teach youth that the end and aim of life
Is but to rival their associates

In their attainments intellectual !

Look to it, parents, ere it be too late ;
For this mode, if pursued in training them,
May prove their country's ruin and their own.

The world will grow but a monstrosity,
* The heart's life being sapped to make the head.
Too large a head oft indicates disease ;
And have we not, already, cause to fear
The world's head of to-day is ricketty ?

Alas ! how often do some think that they
Behold in others real faults, which prove
To be but the reflection of their own !
It is accounted true if any one
Has any special vice, he is the first
To accuse some other of the very same,
Like that poor man who had been drinking much,
And, when was reeling homeward, loudly cried,
“ Why, every man I meet is surely drunk ! ”
And really thought that it was so, poor man.
Ah, well ! perhaps this is but natural ;
We truly are too close to see ourselves ;
And when we ride upon a railroad train,
The outside objects move, not surely we !

Madaline had been three months in school,
When, on a day, a woman, poorly clad,
Came with her boy who had suspended been
For absence, from the room of Madaline.
But, as the week was drawing to a close,

The Principal would not restore the boy,
But, on the following week, told him to come.
And then to Madaline the woman went,
And, as she wiped her eyes upon her shawl,
Would Miss LeRue please let him have his seat
Only till noon? she then could be at home.
And Madaline, quickly sorry for the poor,
And with no thought of possible offense,
Consented willingly ; but, before long
The Principal came in, espied the boy,
And, growing white with anger, caught at him
And by the collar pushed him to the door.
Poor Madaline endeavored to explain :
The boy could not be blamed. If fault there was,
It only was her own. Had she but thought
He could dis'prove, it never had been done.
"You only thought," he said with wrathful sneer,
"That you, indeed, would be the Principal !"
His rudeness, misconception and his sneer
Shocked, grieved and made her angry all at once.

The tears sprang to her eyes, dear little things,
As 'twere to comfort her ; she forced them back ;
She could accept no comfort now, she had not time,
For sixty pairs of eyes were on her face,
Her work was waiting, she must take it up ;
And with one quick, convulsive clasp of hands,
One moment's profound silence, as she thought :
“ My God ! how can this man mistake me thus ! ”
Resumed her work as if naught had occurred.

There came another day, when Madaline
Was rudely summoned to the Presence, where
She found the Principal in wrathful mood.
Why had she put that boy in lower class ?
His mother was displeased ; why was it done ?
And Madaline acquainted him with all ;
How she had, in the branches that she taught,
Most carefully examined all her room,
According to their standing, seating them ;
This certain boy stood low in scholarship,

And for this reason was he graded low ;
She could not, surely, have done otherwise !
He, with his customary sneer, replied :
“ Had you the least discretion in the world,
You ne’er had lowered this boy from higher class !
We can’t afford, in fact, to have ill-will
Of influential people like the Dales ;
You can restore this boy to his old place.”
Had he but known this Madaline, I think
He never would have spoken thus to her.
He had not finished speaking, ere her eyes
Flashed fiercest scorn from out her pallid face ;
And in the fierce contempt she felt for him,
He suddenly assumed a form so small,
That never more could she feel fear, or dread,
Or any thing, but this contempt and scorn.
Her voice with passion trembled as she spoke :
“ Then, in our public schools, you mean to say,
The rich and poor shall not have equal rights ? ”
He, rising, with a furious look, replied :

“You need not question what I bid you do ;
Your interest you’ll find obedience !”

Her eyes flashed back defiance as she said :

“I rather, first, my conscience will obey !
Obeying which, shall fear not *God* nor *man* !”

He, choked with wrath, went straightway to her
room,

And placed the boy again in higher class,
While, in his heart, he vowed he’d crush the one
Who had thus boldly dared defy his power.

Should any think he recognize his coat
In this, the garment I have made, of cloth
Woven from the thread of truth, I swear,
Why, let him put it on ; ’twill keep him warm ;
And, even should it prove a hairecloth shift,
As monks were wont to use in penitence,
Still, let him put it on ; ’tis not so bad ;
I *might* have left truth’s edges rougher yet.
But, taking pity, I have felled the seams,

And, so he wear the garment as he should,
It may prove to his soul a lasting good.

Pope, surely, was not wrong when once he said :
“ A *little* learning is a dangerous thing ;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring ;
There, shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
But drinking largely sobers us again.”
Had this man drank more freely from the spring,
He 'd ne'er mista'en himself for Jupiter
And thought his nod as irrevocable ;
Nor, jealous lest his power be defied,
Would, on the slightest possible offense,
Have hurled his most terrific thunderbolts.
At least, in reading truth and character,
This man was yet not past the alphabet,
And still mistook the little p's for q's,
Because, perchance, they were somewhat alike.
Those who have learned to read a language
well,

Stop not to name the letters of a word,
But with one comprehending glance can take
The whole idea of a sentence in.
And had this man read Madaline as he should,
He might have found the entire thought was
good.

Thus conscious virtue suffers, and because
Some man is ignorant and can not read,
Or, with intent malicious, reads it wrong.

Thus wretched in her work the months passed by,
While Judge LeRue still lay in living death,
But slowly growing weaker day by day.
They had a faithful servant, but the care
Of both her father and the girls was hers,
Which, with her work at school—God knows alone
How heavy was the burden that she bore ;
And I will leave to Him the man who dared
It heavier make in wanton cruelty.

As Spring drew nearer, Madaline was missed —
Another being in her place for weeks ;
And when she came again, her face was seen
As cold and rigid as though carved in stone,
As looking on Death's face had turned her heart.
And those who have, like her, seen loved ones
snatched

From out their loving grasp forevermore,
And know the awful desolation left,
Can feel for her ; can know how one can move,
And even work in way mechanical,
Although she feel as truly dead as he,
Lying in awful silence of the tomb.
It seemed so strange to her that one could smile !
And with what petty things could be amused !
Was she the same who loved the birds and flowers ?
She, now indifferent to every thing ?
But she was turned to stone ; but do stones
ache ?
And all of her was but one great, dull ache,

Made just a little heavier at a laugh,
Or when the children said : "She looks so cross."
And so the dreary year drew to its close,
While since her father's death she had been left
Almost in peace. With her, all feeling gone,
And all the righteous anger she had felt
Drowned in that overwhelming flood of grief.
Her persecutor, really think you, then,
Knowing her sorrow, had forgiven her ?
Not so, indeed ! Whate'er might happen her,
He 'd ne'er forego, not he, his own revenge !
A savage, who may find his victim dead,
The lifeless body yet may mutilate.

The morning after all the schools were closed
And all the children, more like colts let loose,
Wild with their freedom, had with noisy joy
Begun already their long holiday,
Madaline, when looking 'mong the names
Of re-elected teachers for her own,

Espied it writ among the unassigned,
Which meant appointment to another school.
Though not expecting this, yet she was glad.
All Principals could not be such as he
Who had made her year's experience so hard ;
And thus the fact brought sense of real relief.

With truest wisdom now did Madaline
So fill the Summer time with various work,
Sometimes forgot the keenness of her grief.
Oh, blessed labor ! Lethe spring from which
We drink, and, for a time at least, forget
Our own sad hearts ! Who says thou art a curse ?

But two days now ere from the various homes
Would trickle all the tiny rivulets
Which make the body vast of human life
We call a school. Oh, teachers ! parents, too !
Stop you, sometimes, to think how true it is,
As some one long ago has said, our words,

Our acts, are pebbles dropped in these young
minds,

The waves of influence from which will reach
Through all the future generations till
They break upon remotest shores of time?
For good, or ill — Oh, teachers — good, or ill?

Though but two days remained ere all the schools
Were opened, Madaline had been as yet
Assigned no place for the ensuing year.
Then, to the one on whom the people's choice
Had lately fallen, and who him had set
Upon the height to overlook the schools,
After this long suspense, went Madaline.
As he in office scarce had ta'en his seat,
It better were for her to go and see
The visiting committee of her school.
A man appointed because just and good,
Of the merits of her case he best could judge.
(Doubtless he could ; for once a year he came

And spent two minutes in each room, almost,
Or, at the least, glanced in when passing by.)
And Madaline, with growing sense of wrong,
Proceeded to the office of this judge,
Who told her her superior was displeased
And had, in truth, informed him she had failed,
Failed utterly in teaching ; was, in truth,
Impertinent and impudent, and by all means
She from the ranks of teachers should be dropped,
For "discipline must be maintained," you know.
Therefore, as he suggested, had they done.
(Teachers are not asked, Will they resign ?
Without one word of warning, are picked up
And dropped, without a single thought, or care,
Whether the fall will break their hearts, or no,
And may be for no cause save petty spite.
This is an *easy*, if not *manly*, way !)
Her eyes grew large with greatness of surprise,
And Madaline could not help wondering
If arts were used, or greater strength of will,

By her so-called superior, to make
This man, without his knowing it, his tool.

Her voice intense, but calm, she answered him :

“ He knows the reasons he assigns are false,
And an investigation I demand ! ”

In seemingly indifferent tone, he said :

“ It would be useless, quite. This man stands high
Among our Principals, and was by some
E’en named for Superintendent of our schools.
We can’t do otherwise than take his word. ”

Her eyes flashed angrily. She answered him :

“ You give the veriest criminal better chance.

In his case, you would deign to hear both sides !

In Justice’s name, I say it should not be

His word should weigh mine down, and that, be-
cause

His higher office is put in the scale !

’T is cunning, more than merit, now-a-days,

That helps to fill our public offices,

And if, perchance, it should elect a fool,
Must we, in spite of reason, call him wise ?
'T is only simple justice that I ask.
Had you but sent me to another school
Where I could fairly have been judged, and then
Had my work been condemned, I 'd be content ;
But you admit no evidence, save that
Of him who vowed he 'd be revenged on me !”

He sat unmoved, and Madaline said on more.
What was her right she would not stoop to beg ;
But, taking up her heavy wrong, she rose
And with firm step passed out into the street.

“ Ah, well !” she murmured, as she left his door,
“ God help the Right, when *good* men thus can
stand
And tamely put their necks in yoke with wrong !”



CANTO VII.

The Autumn wind is sighing mournfully
As dying leaves fall one by one to earth.
Some trees already stand all bare and still —
Silent and still, save when some gust of wind,
Convulsive shudders through their branches send,
As though, indeed, they were convulsed with grief
As memory turned their thoughts to Summer time,
When they were happy all the livelong day
In watching the sweet frolics of their leaves,
And listening to their voices, soft and low,—
Now left in sorrow to bend over them
And drop their icy tears upon their graves.

From the windows of her room, our Madaline
Is sadly gazing on the dreary scene.

In humble dwelling, old and weather - stained,
A stately residence on either side,
And just across the way the towers and spires,
Rising from a fashionable church,
All looking down upon it in contempt,
Is now the home of Madaline and hers.
Of three small rooms upon the upper floor,
This little home consists ; but, happily,
Two of them turn their faces to the street,
Allowing those within, when so they choose,
To watch the tide of life that flows beneath.

Poor Madaline has found it difficult,
Even in this humble way, to live
And find the golden gifts with which to keep
Relentless cold and hunger from the door.
She had recourse to her accomplishments,
Her knowledge of piano and guitar,
But the musical profession, like the rest,
Contains so many, they each other crowd ;

And those who glean in fields professional,
To be successful gleaners, must, perforce,
Boldly and rudely push them to the front ;
In other words, must put on learned airs,
Impress all with the knowledge they possess,
So they would hope by them to be employed.
But Madaline had studied much and deep,
And would have blushed, assuming to be wise ;
(" 'T is but the wise that knows himself a fool,")
And, otherwise, she was too sensitive,
Too proud and modest her own praise to sound,
And less successful was in consequence.
And she, too, found so many needy ones,
With whom to share the little that she got,
And carry as a burden on her heart ;
Some sick or dying woman, or some child
Whose existence to her neighbors was unknown.
"None are so blind as those who *will* not see !"
But Madaline saw sorrow every where,
And when the sight was more than she could bear,

And she would turn her eyes to brighter things,
Imagination still would show to her
The world's great host of heavy-laden hearts,
Till she in sorrow sighed: "Poor world! poor
world!

If my small life could bring to you relief,
How gladly would I lay it down for you!"

Upon this cold and drear November day,
She gazes sadly out upon the street,
Her white hands clasped before her, and her look
Both sad and dreamy, as in revery.
Ladies, richly dressed and daintily,
It is the morning of a Sabbath day,
Are passing by and entering the church.
At length, two, dressed more richly than the most,
Attract the dreamy look of Madaline;
And bitter smile, half scornful, curls her lip
As she, thus to herself, says musingly:
"Those ladies were, in happier days, my guests,

Well pleased to be invited to my home,
Who now in rustling silks or velvet clad,
If with a friend, will pass me on the street,
Feigning they do not see me ; if alone,
May condescend to give to me their white-gloved
Finger-tips, and ask me what I do,
And where do I now live, with well-feigned interest.
And with what haughtiness I answer them !
Alas ! how true, that suffering makes us proud,
And not prosperity ! Through suffering one be-
comes

But hard and bitter. Even wild crab-apples,
Though but crab-apples still, are much improved
By sunshine and good soil ; and so with men.
'T is easy to be good when one is blest,
While noblest natures, crushed by work and
care,
Misunderstood, despised, as poor men are,
Grow proud as Lucifer, and, in time, perhaps,
Become as bad, and, fiendish, take delight

In giving pain to others, as if thus
Would be revenged for their own misery.

“And now the one who steps across the street
With such a conscious air of looking well,
The lady is, who, that she might fulfil
Her Christian duties well (for Mrs. Vane,
Who lives in regal style, yet visits oft
The poor,) the trouble took to call on me,
And gave me good advice, for full an hour,
Talking of things she did not understand,
All with the greatest volubility.

“How fluently most women always talk
Who have nothing in the world to talk about!
Full often, without rudeness, one can not
Put their small word, not even edgewise, in;
And then it so exasperates, to find
That from the multitude of words to which
You were compelled so long to listen,

You can not glean one thought, e'en second - hand.
Yet talk they smoothly and more prettily
Than might a person who possessed a mind,
Who sometimes pauses to await the thought.

“And when she gave me opportunity,
And had advised me well to go to church,
I doubtless would find consolation there,
How shocked she looked when thus I answered her :
‘Churches are for the rich, and not the poor ;
Built by the rich, of course belong to them.
They may invite the poor to come, ’t is true,
And patronize them kindly ; in fact, treat
Them to a piece of piety, as they.
Indeed, might treat a beggar child to pie ;
But surely, no poor, sorrow-laden heart
Will to these churches for their comfort go.’
I said the large cathedrals were the best,
For there the poor, as rich grief-laden hearts,
Might feel when kneeling on the marble floor,

No presence there, excepting that of God.
God pity us ! *we* went to church to see
The dress of others, or to show our own,
Or, it might be for change, or exercise,
Or hear a sermon intellectual—
For any thing, God knew, but worship him !

I talked so earnestly I frightened her,
And then she said to me, half-timidly :
' I hope, at least, that you are orthodox.'
To which I answered that I trusted not,
And that I could not, for my life, see what
These churches knew more than the ancients did :
Chaos was still the father of all things,
And still the gods did rule us as they please,
Not wisely, justly — simply by caprice.
We all were still attended by the fates,
Who, when it pleased them, clipped the thread of
 life ;
And grim old Charon in his boat, at last

Ferried us all across death's turbid stream.
How loftily the woman then arose,
And closer her rich mantle round her drew,
As if it were a robe of righteousness
That might be sullied by one found so vile !
Yet, in contempt for her and her advice,
My words were somewhat stronger than my
thought,
And I my doubts, as certainties, expressed.
For, true, in every church are God-like men ;
And some rare souls who stand before the world,
Among the world's great masters may be placed,
'Fore whom my soul has bowed in reverence,
And I have longed to worship at their feet,
Till I remembered then, that though their light
Might be divine, are human beings still,
And even might have faults ; so I prefer
To leave them at such distance that their light,
Like that of the fixed stars, is all I see ;
But brightest ray can ne'er reach my dark soul,

For in some cypress swamp, as 't were, am mired.
On every side, as far as eye can reach,
Nothing but mire. What do they reck to me,
The light and beauty otherwheres ! The world to
me

Is mire ; nothing *but* mire ! and over me,
The sad, dark cypress boughs wail drearily
As 't were a requiem above my grave.
My head has been bowed down so long with grief,
I e'en almost forget there is a heaven,
With a sun and stars." Unhappy Madaline —
Left to grope blindly in the dark, alone,
With no one near to lead thee to the light.

And now, she from the window turns away,
And sighing, says : "I 'm tired ! very tired !
And soon, I know my strength, exhausted, fails,
And I, so weary, would most gladly sleep
The long, deep sleep of death, e'en if I knew
That from that sleeping I should never wake.

But there, O Heaven, are Lola and Estelle !
I *can not* leave them in the world alone.”
She groans in anguish at the very thought.

Go, look upon Laocoön, and note
His anguish when the serpent coils were drawn
So close he saw his utmost power was naught,
And know the agony of Madaline —
Such agony as but strong souls can feel
When conquered by inevitable fate.

The dreary day to drearier night has turned,
And Madaline at her window stands again,
But in the deep, thick blackness seeing naught.
Indeed, all sight seems into sound submerged,
As round the house the fierce wind screams and
howls ;
She, shuddering, turns away. It truly seems
A night to powers of darkness given o'er !
What is the fiercely raging wind, which shrieks

And roars and shakes the windows of her room,
But fiends, from the infernal region sent
To mock her wild despair and laugh, "Ha, ha !
Where now is all the courage and the strength
You bravely boasted but three years ago !
Ha, ha ! You are a goodly bird, no doubt !
With strong and well-developed wings, ha, ha !
We soon will give you big black wings, like
ours !

Demoniac fires shall shine in those dimmed eyes,
And you shall laugh again — oh, yes, you shall —
A fiendish laugh, like ours. Ha, ha ! ha, ha !"

The voices seemed so near she almost shrieked.
She put both hands before her face, lest she
Should see the glaring eyes look in on her.
But this soon grew too horrible to bear ;
She rose and made a light, and paced the room
Until the day appeared, at whose approach
The phantoms of the night all turned and fled ;

And then you might have seen this Madaline,
Move slow about the room, with face like death,
But yet a perfect calmness in her eyes,
As though some struggle that had lasted long,
Was with decided purpose ended now ;—
And Madaline had suffered all she could.
There is a limit to our suffering,
And when we reach it, we can feel no more,
Though sorrow upon sorrow may be poured.
It is, in sooth, as if we set some cups
Out in the rain, which may incessant fall,
And yet these cups can hold but just so much —
Some more, some less, according to their size.
Madaline's cup was large, but it was full ;
And not until the sunshine of some joy
Evaporate a portion of her grief,
Can she feel more of sorrow or of pain.

Let not the natures light, who never felt
A real sorrow in their lives, now raise

Their hands in holy horror at this girl ;
But let those judge her who have depth to know
The anguish of despair of tender hearts.
Had she not struggled hard for those she loved ?
Had she not done her work, too, faithfully,
Till cruel men had shut and barred her out,
Unmindful if she perish in the cold ?
Still, there was one thing left to dare and do ;
With her own hand she would unlock life's door,
Take both her loved ones with her and depart.
Whither ? The secret passage from the world,
'T is true, looked dark ; but it *must* lead to *rest* —
Oh, yes : *must* lead to rest, she was so *tired* !
And she would go and buy some sleeping draught,
And at their supper-time would mix it with
Some fragrant tea, in dainty china cups ;
And she would watch her little sisters drink —
Those sweet young things whom she had loved so
well,
To save from harm she would have giv'n her life,

When life was sweet and dear ; and now, through
love

To save from harm, will take them where she goes.
Yes ; she will watch them till they fall asleep—
The deep, deep sleep, from which they will not
wake,

And then, herself will drink the fatal cup,
And then — and then will leave the rest to God.

She plans the details all out quietly,
And when her sisters leave her for their school
She starts in search of some life-taking drug.

Hercules, when from his flesh he found
He had not strength to tear th' envenomed robe,
Calmly built his own funereal pile,
And, as became a hero, waited death.

CANTO VIII.

As Madaline is yielding to despair,
Horace, the while, upon the spot renowned,
Pressed by so many feet of Earth's great men,
Has passed the drear, dark hour preceding
day,

And in the east, a rosy flush of hope
Heralds the bright morn of some great joy.
O Horace ! the rosy light which you behold,
May be the fire from some funereal pile !

O Heart ! bow down again before thy God,
And bless Him still for whatsoe'er he sends.
The sweetest cup of life is bitter-sweet,
And if it shall so prove, He knows for thee
The purely bitter the more wholesome is ;

Humbly submissive, drink the bitter draught.
He knows our needs, and doeth all things well.

Of all the myriad hearts that beat in Rome
Upon the day that Horace chanced to read
The written name of "Edward Vaughn and wife,"
Were none that beat more painfully than his
As, at the dining hour, he sat with look
Intent upon the door through which these two
Now soon must pass in entering the room.
The strong man's face is blanched to ghastliness.
The paper rustles in his trembling hand.
At length the moment comes. There, full in sight,
Perfect in ease and grace, is Edward Vaughn.
Strange ! Was he awake and sitting there,
Or did he dream ? That lady by the side
Of Edward Vaughn was surely not his wife !
A handsome lady, elegantly dressed,
But not the very least like Madaline !
Bewildered, he some moments sat, while they,

On whom his intense, perplexed look was fixed,
Not seeing him, were placed so near that he
Soon heard a chance allusion to "my wife ;"
And thus the truth at last dawned on his mind.
Then, from his surcharged heart, tumultuous,
Returned the life-blood in a mighty wave,
Which, for a moment, drowned both sight and
sense,

And but confused within his memory
Will ever be what after this transpired.
His food, his drink, the very air he breathed,
His very being's self, seemed but to be
The single thought that he had leave to go
To Madaline, in some great sorrow's pain.
The speeding train how slowly bore him on !
Oh, had he but the wings to fly to her !
No need to haste thee, Horace ! She you love
Will, at your coming, be but deaf to all
The tender words of love that you may speak,
And blind to all the tears that you may shed.

When Madaline, so tired, so tired of life,
Started in quest of what might soothe to rest,
Ere scarce she reached the street, she reeled and
fell.

It chanced that two were passing at the time,
Who gently raised her up and carried her
Back to the little home she had but left.
And then two ministering angels came,
Not as we picture them, in white, with wings,
But in the dress of "Mercy's Sisters" clad,
And through the fever which raged many days,
In which she fought the fiends of that dark night,
And shrieked for Horace's and her father's help,
With utmost care and patience tended her.
(Whoever does his work as in God's sight,
Will do that work, however lowly, well.)

When deep, lethargic sleep stole over her —
The state of rest which to the most is sent
Ere plunging in to cross death's chilling stream —

The fever having all its fuel burned,
And left her lying there so still, and white
As pale and lifeless ashes from the fire —
Haggard and worn from haste and want of rest,
Back from his long sojourn in foreign climes,
Came Horace to his native land and her.

A gentle "Sister" met him at the door,
And in deep pity for this strong man's pain
When briefly she of Madaline's illness told,
Gave him her place as watcher by the couch.
With kind consideration she, the while,
That she might not upon his grief intrude,
Softly about the room employed herself.

For long, his sobs suppressed his strong frame
shook ;
But when the storminess of grief was past,
With humble heart, he murmured brokenly :
" I thank Thee, Father, I am come in time

To look upon my darling's face once more.
If I but come to close her eyes in death,
Teach me to say Thy will be done, O God ! ”

Horace, look up ! Heaven asks of thee no more.
See now your loved one's eyes regarding you,
Filled with the light of full intelligence.
Now the physician enters carefully,
And on his patient looks in glad surprise,
Which Horace sees, and that he may conceal
His great emotion, quickly leaves the room.

When he, who by a glance had bid him hope,
At length with cheerful face the sick-room leaves,
Horace, with deepest feeling grasps his hand,
And as that grasp as warmly is returned,
He hears the words as Heavenly music sweet :
“ I think with greatest care that she may live.”

Days came and went ere Horace saw her more,
For Madaline, with lingering step and slow,

Returned from brink of death again to earth ;
And long the flame of life so feebly burned
That but an agitating breath might quench.

As she grew stronger, there would often come
Before her vision Horace's suffering face,
As she had seen it by her when she waked.
And as she looked about the room and saw
The evidence of tenderest regard,
And with delight the pleasing fragrance breathed
Of flowers, beautiful and rare, or ate
The fruit which each returning day supplied,
And with her thought from whence all came
assured,
A happy light would steal into her eyes
As she would think : " This is for love of me."
And then in memory she lived again
The olden time before misfortune came ;
And looking back, she thought she recognized
In Horace's tender looks a depth beyond

What she had then supposed he felt for her ;
Then, to herself, she musingly would say :
“Strange, I could give my heart to Edward
 Vaughn
While he, the prince of men, was standing by !
But then I was a child — a very child.”

Thus had mused Madaline ; and then came doubts.
It could not be he loved her all this while,
E'en were it true that he had loved her once,
And what seemed evidence of love was prompted
 by

A friendship for the daughter of his friend.
It could be nothing more, for day by day
She watched and waited, thinking he might come ;
But he came not. Had it been *love* he felt,
He ne'er had stayed away from her so long.
And so the transient happiness would die,
And than before leave her more lone and sad,
While, with a feeling of shy diffidence,

Through all her thought she yet no question
asked.

Days passed away, and although Madaline
Had walked with tottering step across the floor,
There to her weakness came no farther strength,
And into tired listlessness she sank.

The man of medicine looked grave and said
Life seemed to have no hope on which to feed ;
And, seeking Horace, told him he might come.
Seeing a friend might now result in good.

So, after dreary waiting, came at last
The happy summons to his loved one's side ;
And when at length he stood before her there,
His eyes so full of tenderness for her,
Impulsively her whole heart went to him,
And, stretching out her arms as infant will
When it looks up and sees its mother near,
She was clasped close in Horace's strong embrace.

CANTO IX.

As after toil our rest is doubly sweet ;
As freedom from pain is, after agony ;
As brighter and more beautiful the day
Succeeding to a dark and dreary night,
So Horace's happiness in Madaline
Is sweeter for the waiting and the pain.
His love, so satisfying and profound,
Compensates for all sorrows of the past ;
And he, whate'er the future brings, can say :
"I own my share of earthly bliss was large."

And Madaline? Is she, too, satisfied?
She truly Horace loves, and loves him well ;
And even at the hearing of his step,
A flush of joy quick mantles her fair face.

Not wholly happy, though, is Madaline.
Once, love like this entirely had sufficed ;
But now her restless heart cries out for more.
Looking beyond earth's brief felicity,
Her poet gaze, directed to the end,
Is yet not keen enough to pierce the clouds
Which throw their shadows even on her love ;
And she, beyond the clouds, sees not the light.
Madaline, for satisfying peace,
Must build her loves and hopes upon a rock ;
But looking round she can see nought but sand.
And thus it was that she, ere scarce had died
The thrill that Horace's kiss at parting gave,
Would turn away and sigh. Oh, if she dared
But talk with him ! but then, would he not think
She did not love him if she could be sad ?
But he the sadness saw e'en through her smiles,
And one day, taking both her hands in his,
He bent on her a look of deepest love,
While thus he said : " My darling Madaline,

Should not our hearts e'er to each other be
As open book, without a secret page?
Something troubles you, my Madaline."

And then, without reserve, she told to him
How she had lost all faith in church and creed,
And life and death were but dark mysteries,
While not one ray of light pierced the Beyond.
She might be wholly happy in his love,
Could she but close and lock the door of thought ;
But she could not, and through that open door
She saw the path of life — how short it was —
Yet, helpless creatures fainted by the way ;
And if to good or ill this path might lead,
She could not see, for at the end her view
Obstructed was by darkness and thick gloom.

Horace looked down tenderly on her
And drew her closer to him as he said :
"My dearest Madaline, try as we may,

No eyes but those of Faith can pierce the gloom.”
And she replied : “ But one may wish, yet find it is
Impossible in aught to have belief.

To have a perfect faith, methinks one must
Have but a narrow mind. Do not we all
Now laugh at even what the men, called great.
In by-gone ages, have believed ? Danté was great
In depth, and yet, between contracted banks,
The deep, strong current of his genius ran.
He, without doubt, most thoroughly believed
The center of our system was the Earth,
And on this basis placed his Heaven and Hell,
And thought he wrote both poetry and truth.
Thus all philosophers, in ages past,
Building upon the science of the times
In which they lived, thought they had reached the
truth.

Those coming after, proving Earth is round,
The stars are worlds, and our world, too, a star
Revolving fast in space, thus also proved

Those structures of philosophy were false,
And that without foundations, they were naught
But unsubstantial 'castles in the air.'
And can we think our light so great, that those
Who may live here a century hence will not
Prove, too, our theories ridiculous ?

"And what belief is there, I might accept,
Would end the strife between my head and heart ?
My heart cries out for sweet, confiding faith
In something high, yet personal and near.
I'm chilled by Positive Philosophy.
Its coldness truly numbs my very life,
While still my reason cries : 'Can you not see
The road is straight and firm these great men
tread —

These honest, earnest men, as well as great ?'
And it presumptuous seems, for such as I,
To doubt conclusions of such lofty minds —
Men who, with greatest patience and broad sight,

Have spent their years in search of simple
truth.

Yet, all to me so cold and dreary seems,
I sooner far had lived in olden times,
When field and grove and air were all alive
With higher beings, not too far removed
To be in sympathy with human life.

“And then, what say to those Philosophers
Who tell us that there is no Heaven or Hell,
Nor Immortality, nor even God ;
And tell us that our soul is but our life,
And life is only matter, after all ?

“And Horace, What is there left for those
Who still believe that there *is* soul and God ?
For learned men have thrown our old beliefs
Down to the earth, and so bedraggled them,
Who cares for cleanness ne’er can wear them
more.

“And if, O Horace! if there is a God,
Does He stoop low enough to note the pain
His creatures suffer, and yet give no help?”
And Madaline sighed as thus she ceased to speak.

Then Horace, with his eyes full of the light
Which shone serene on him above the clouds
Which cast their gloomy shade on Madaline,
Thus answered her: “My darling, it is true
That we may never have a perfect faith
In theories of men; but, ne’ertheless,
May have a perfect trust that He who made
The Universe will never do us wrong.
Dear Madaline, e’en if we thought it true
Our souls must wander through the beasts and
birds,
Or even thought we should be swallowed up
In the Universal Intellect at last —
As India believed — therefore complain?
Shall we grow so audacious as to think

Our erring judgment better than our God's?
If we believe in God at all, we must,
Knowing Him to be great, believe Him good,
And better than can we, decide our fate.
The very keystone of Religion's arch
Is simple faith 'He doeth all things well.'

"And, if men err in letter of their creeds,
We must not cast away the truth still there,
Though, true, we must look higher than a church.
And modern churches oft have made mistake
When trying to point out the way to Truth,
By singling out the footprints of some man,
If Calvin's, or another's, chance to be,
And bidding others step in those same tracks,
Which make too long a stride for some to take,
For others, may be short or indirect;
To any, awkward walking is, at least.
None ever should attempt to others guide
Until he first ascend some eminence

Where he can see how broad the way to Heaven —
How many footprints point that self-same way ;
Then, rather, turn men's faces toward it
By teaching them to lead true, noble lives,
And they will surely reach it for themselves,
Whether they choose to walk in somber shade,
Or walk, instead, in higher, sunlit paths.

“ And it is well for us to bear in mind
Truth may change form as oft as Proteus,
And we, like Hercules, must hold it fast
Till it assume the shape we recognize.
The various religions of the world
Have really been the truth in various guise,
Although we find it still with error mixed.
And it were better far for man, indeed,
To make the earth intelligent with life
Of genii, nymphs and fairies, than to make
All but the evolution of blind force.
We say the Olympian gods were faulty Greeks ;—

Yet, those who worshiped truly as they knew,
Were certainly ennobled by the act.
And one especial faith, than other faiths,
Is not more saving. Surely, the good are good,
For all the difference in belief. I think
It so it be true gold, God will not ask
In what especial manner purified ;
And of less consequence what we believe,
Than how, upon sincere belief, we act.
Still, that form of religion should each choose,
Which gives his moral nature wholesome food
By which to daily grow in strength and size ;
Remembering yet, what is good food for him
May but rank poison to another be ;
And not find fault with what another eats
If so upon it that one well doth thrive.

“ You, my sweet Madaline, are a flower
That needs the sunshine, and that cold will kill ;
And if as claimed, the air be fresh and pure

On high plateaus of Comte's Philosophy,
It yet is cold and chill ; too so, my dear,
For tender poet hearts, like yours, to bloom.
Stay in the valley, dearest, where soft clime
Shall ripen all your nature's sweetest fruits.
Those in the valley, too, may often see
Farther than those upon the mountain may,
If so they have not climbed above the clouds.
And those Philosophers, dear Madaline,
Who have, by constant and laborious thought,
'T is true, climbed far the mountain side, and
thus

Can take a truer view of that beneath
Than those enveloped in the cloud and dust
Of prejudice and creed may ever do,
Yet, from their lofty height, they but look
down.

Scorning to use Imagination's glass,
Rejecting all, except the so-called real,
They little see with dull, unaided eyes.

“ When all is said, my dearest Madaline,
What more has Modern Science done, than show
The Infinite is greater, than we thought —
To finite minds, incomprehensible ?
Try as he may, weak man can never sound
Infinite depths with finite sounding - lines ;
And those Philosophers who think that they,
While on the earth, will e’er be capable
To comprehend the ways of the All - Wise,
Are much too rash in their self - confidence.
The little flies, imprisoned in a room,
May fly up to the ceiling, where they say :
‘ Now we have reached the highest point of all ! ’
And then we laugh at them, we bigger flies
Who can see all the boundless out-of-door ;
And so may the Supreme, or angels, laugh
At all the rash self-confidence of those
Who think they’ve reached the limits of the Truth.
Madaline, these great and wise Philosophers
Remind me of the little Concord boy

Whom one saw digging in the earth, and asked,
What was he doing there ? who quick replied :
'Oh, sir, I 'm searching for the Infinite.'
'T is true the man, than child, much taller is ;
Thus, many inches nearer to the moon.
The moon to each, howe'er, is yet far off ;
And so I think, the distance is so great,
The little child by digging in the earth
Will reach the Infinite as soon as they.
But yet, Infinity can work both ways,
And, just so sure as God is great and far,
May also be enthroned in soul of man,
And can hear, too, the humblest whispered prayer.
Ah ! great and wise men ! This is where they err.
They have strong sight, but only look one way ;
Thus, are false teachers to their fellow-men
Who strain their eyes the way these sages point,
And, blinded by immensity and light,
Leave all their work undone, or do it ill.
They know full well that there is work to do —

And is not that enough? But they must try
Boldly to see the very Master's self!
For those with eyesight strong enough to look
Straight toward the Central Truth, like those rare
men,

True poets and philosophers, 't is well;
But they are very few who will not grow
Confused and reel, perhaps may even fall,
And so far lose their reason as to say,
Because they can not see, 'There is no God!'
Know, poor misguided ones, while on the earth
These greatest who look farthest ne'er will see
More than the light which penetrates the veil
That hides the face of the Unknowable.

"Then let weak man, instead, but contemplate
The image of his God, which he may see
Reflected in the lives of all good men
Until he so in love with virtue grow,
He, too, may practice it; that so, perchance,

At close of life, he may be strong enough
To bear to see God's very self and live.

“ Let him, instead of standing but to gaze, —
With eyes ùplifted, true, yet standing low —
Stoop to the humble work-about his feet.
Lowly deeds of love are lowly rounds
Of that great ladder reaching to the skies.
The ladder-rounds may be so much alike
There may be dreary sameness in them, true,
And while intent the where to place our feet,
We may not realize we climb at all
Until we feel ourselves grow blithe and strong,
Breathing the purer air which we have reached.
Ask those who spend their lives in loving acts,
If they have not, by self-forgetting work,
Climbed to an atmosphere so pure they feel
Almost as light and joyous as the birds ;
As one has felt when he has breathed the air
Upon the mountains, when he neared the top;

Thus, slowly climbing higher, day by day,
At length, when all our work is done, we hear
A voice, which says: 'Look up! Behold your
God!'

"I truly think it strange, so many men,
Because they fancy Modern Science and
Philosophy, have proved their faiths but false,
Do, on account of that, lead careless lives.
They say, that if there *is* a *God* and *Heaven*,
God must be good, and so He surely will
Let them, with others, share in Heaven's de-
lights.

Poor, foolish men! they do not stop to think,
Things that are dead, to naught are sensible!
And they must not expect to pleasure feel,
With moral natures lifeless as a stone
Through life-long, selfish sinning. Would any
know

The depths of happiness which he may reach,

Let him with pains, and care, keep well alive
His tender sensibilities of soul ;
And neither let them die, become diseased,
Nor, yet, by their improper use, be dulled.

“And do you ask: ‘What shall we say to
those

Who tell us that there is no Heaven, or Hell,
Nor Immortality, nor even God?’

We’ll simply say to them, my Madaline,
Science is a goodly animal,

If so we keep him tame ; but if, perchance,
It shall run mad, we will not calmly stand,
And let it eat up both our souls and God !

We long will fight, ere it shall take our souls !

Without them, what are we, but corpses dead
Drifting on life’s sea, or here, or there ;

No aim, no hope, because, in truth, no life.

Our poor, white faces turned up to the sky,

In stony stare, with which we can see nought.

“And, darling, is it hard to understand,
How God can see our suff’ring, and not help?
She, doubtless, of the shining face of Truth,
Had caught a glimpse, who wrote these lovely
words :

‘Suffering may be but joy, misunderstood.’
At least, I feel assured, dear Madaline,
Who takes pain for the best, thus makes it so,—
And verifies : ‘ Whatever is, is right.’
No evil is we may not turn to good,
And with ourselves it lies, whether, so prove,
Our ills become our servants, or we theirs.

“And now, dear Madaline, of all that I
Have tried to show, this is the summary :
Wiser, by far, and happier, are those
Who learn to trust their instincts, Heaven-born ;
And all, a safer guide, or soon, or late,
Will find the intuitions of the soul,
Than all the loftiest reasoning of the mind.

Intuition, is a bird that flies
Straight to the point, and more unerringly,
Than dull, slow-footed Reason, e'er can do.
The latter may, in time, arrive at truth,
Or, it may lose itself entirely,
In labyrinthine paths of sophistry."

Raising her eyes, in which a new-born hope
Contended with regret, said Madaline :
"O, Horace ! how have I wandered in the dark !
Had you but been beside me all these years,
You might have kept me by you in the light,—
And I, the light to others might have shown.
I longed, and tried, to comfort the distressed,
But all that I could do was but to weep."
And then her face grew radiant as she said :
"But still, I will not grieve, for you have taught
My errors, and my darksome wandering,
I may yet make my own. and others', good.



CANTO X.

A June morn, beautiful and softly bright,
Is Madaline's and Horace's marriage morn.
The heaven has donned its dress of brightest blue,
And lovely cirrus clouds of snowy white,
Wrought in fantastic patterns, here and there
Softened, but do not hide, the hue beneath ;
As 't were a queen who had arrayed herself
In richest azure robe, and over it
Had draped exquisite lace of rare device.

But fairer than the day is Madaline.
Never has she been so beautiful
In winning grace of youth and health. The while,
Like halo 'round the moon when rain is near,
Past sorrow has around her beauty left

A tender, chastened radiance of its own.
The brooding shadows from her eyes are gone,
And, as they had, from Horace's, sunshine caught,
There shines in them the light of love and
 hope,
As she, by Horace's side, her hand in his,
Listens with sweet and trustful confidence
To his strong, tender words, to cherish her
Through good, through ill, till Death should come
 to part.

And when the ring upon her hand was placed,
And Horace on his young wife's lips had pressed
The customary kiss, took her away
To visit — as she had expressed desire —
First time since leaving it, her childhood's home.
No wedding tour could her the pleasure give,
Equal to that she might receive from but
One day of wandering with him, among
The lovely spots she haunted as a child.

But when was there, and Horace rang the bell,
Simply to ask the favor, as she thought,
To spend a time in walking through the grounds,
Her aunt, who had her second mother been,
Whom she supposed so many miles away,
Stepped forward to the door to welcome her ;—
And then, the joyous greeting at an end,
She, into Horace's face, with wonder, looked ;
Who, smiling lovingly upon her, said :
“ Welcome, my darling, to your future home.
Accept your bridal gift, my Madaline.”

When passed the shock of her surprise and joy,
Horace led her through the well-known house,
Showed her the rooms of Lola and Estelle,
Who would come on the morrow from their school,
Where they had been since Horace placed them
there

During the time that Madaline was ill.
And then they spent the hours in wandering

Through lovely dells and shady woodland paths,
More joyous than the birds which sang for them.
And as the day was drawing to a close,
And all the shadows on the grass grew long,
Horace led her to a rustic bower,
Where, years before, she had so often sat.
As hushed and peaceful as were their own hearts,
The lake lay stretched before them, lighted up
With tender, iridescent hues, and dotted o'er
With snowy sails bright with the sun's last rays,
While all the western heaven was glorious
With royal colors borrowed from the sun.
The lovely grounds, the lake, the glowing west —
It surely were sufficient loveliness
E'en to inspire an unpoetic soul.
They, for some time, in happy silence sat,
And then, "O Horace !" exclaimed Madaline,
"I would that I now had a poet's power,
That I might paint this loveliness in words,
That others with me might the beauty share !"

And then, half pensively, she said to him :
“ Horace, I often used to think it hard
To have a poet’s sensibilities,
To fancy and aspire, and yet be dumb.
Often, oh, so often, have I ached
With tender fancy, or with fiery thought,
And felt that I must write, if but to cool
The fever that consumed ; and so in haste
Would set to work to find, alas ! my thoughts,
Like molten metal from the furnace drawn,
When written down, had grown but stiff and cold ! ”

And Horace, with the poem in his mind,
Whose sad intensity had pierced his soul,
Replied : “ Dear Madaline do not say cold !
They were not like to molten metal, true,
Whose very heat makes it with brightness glow.
You will forgive me, dearest, when I say,
Who read your poems, rather felt that they,
In an abyss of boiling blackness, looked.”

She, then, into his face half sadly smiled :
“I must have written truer than I knew,
For at the time I wrote, my mind was like
Earth’s seething chaos ere the light was born.
A poet’s office is to soothe and charm ;
So, of his lyre, must gently touch the strings,
That all his music may be soft and sweet.
I did, by my abruptness, startle all.
Forgetting, I but loudly clashed the strings ;
For I had suffered much, and had grown harsh ;
And so my music also, when I played,
Was but harsh, too, and, if inspired at all,
Rather by Mars than by the god of love.

A poet true, with fancies delicate,
Should wrap an airy veil ’round nothingness,
So all admire its graceful loveliness.
His music must be low and sweet. He should
So gently touch the strings, the strains will be
As far and soft as sound of falling snow,—

Or whisperings of leaves when they reply
To tender, wooing breezes of the night.
And he must paint his pictures with a brush
Dipped in the liquid moonbeams ; or the faint,
Sweet tints of Summer's clouds at set of sun.

“My writing, at the best, is but a string
Of common beads, with here and there a pearl;
Although the pearls were real, who'd wear the
string?

I'll be *your* poet, Horace, not the world's.”
And, looking up at him, she sweetly smiled,
“A loving critic I may hope to please ;
It would be pain, however just, to see
Others tear in pieces what I weave,
Declaring it ill-woven, and worse spun,
And then untwist the threads, and burn a bit,
To prove it only common cotton, too ;
But, Horace, I have often sighed to think,
Many with divine material,

Which might a fabric make of priceless worth,
To be as precious heirloom handed down
Through coming generations, will, through want,
Oft spoil their work by haste, and all for
naught,
Except the paltry shillings it may bring.
Ghiberti, on his gate, toiled fifty years ;
And on one poem, Gray saw twenty die,
Ere smoothed, and rounded, to its perfect shape.
What modern worker thinks *one* year not long ?
But gems of thought, 't is true, will scarce buy
bread ;
Few can afford the time to polish them ;
And though one spend his time in search of
pearls,
Diving far down into his nature's depths,
For what the world may wear, and not himself,
That world, meanwhile, stands by and lets him
starve.
"T is sad that poets should have common needs !"

And Horace, with his tender smile, replied :
“ Ah ! Madaline, you have a poet soul ;
And you might write true poem, if you would.
And in the school of grief, where you have been,
The best born poets often gain their wings.
As winged Pegasus sprang from Gorgon's blood,
A thing so dread, beholding turned to stone,
So, from the blood of sorrow, oft will spring
Divinest thoughts and fancies. Yet, Madaline,
’Tis very sad to be a poet, dear,
For all true thought is born in agony ;
And child of Genius, whatsoe’er he be,
A poet, painter, actor,—what you will,—
Like pelican, tears open its own breast,
And feeds its offspring with its own life-blood.”

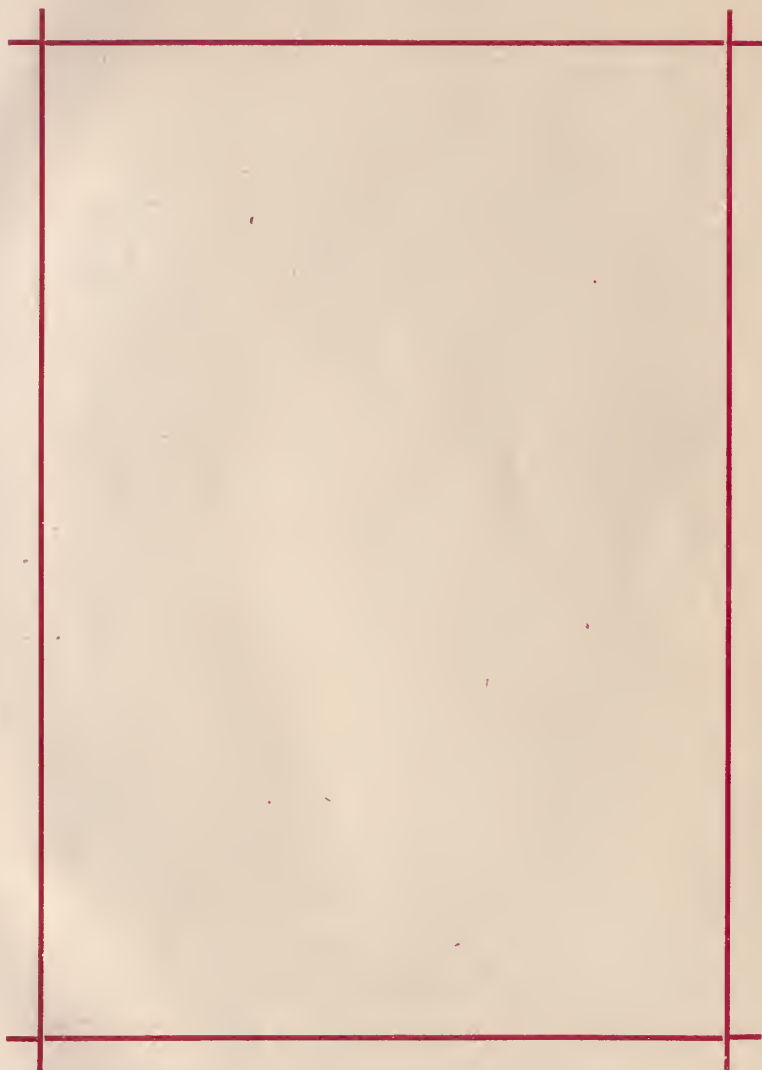
The sun's last crimson rays had disappeared,
While Horace and his young wife thus conversed,
And as they watched the daylight fade to dusk,
He drew her closer with his circling arm,

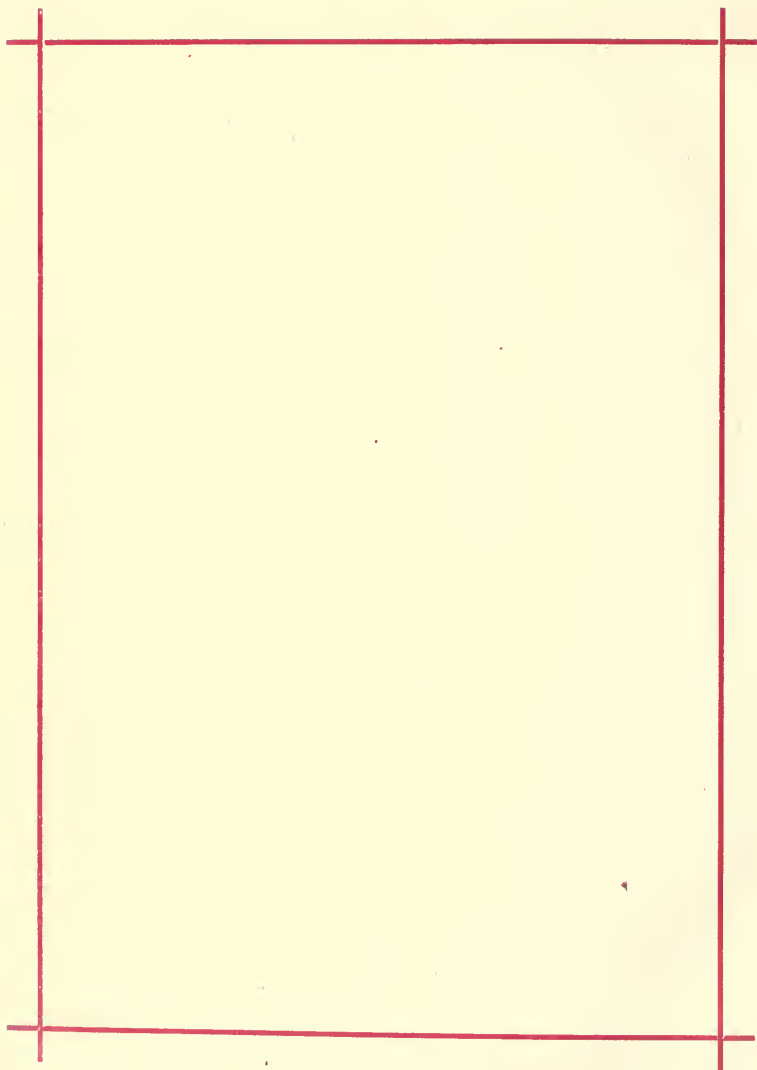
And looking in her eyes' deep tenderness,
He whispered: "Darling, have you so forgot
Past sorrows, you are truly happy now?"
And as her eyes' soft light beamed into his,
She answered, in a low, sweet, thrilling voice:
"So happy, Horace, I could almost weep."

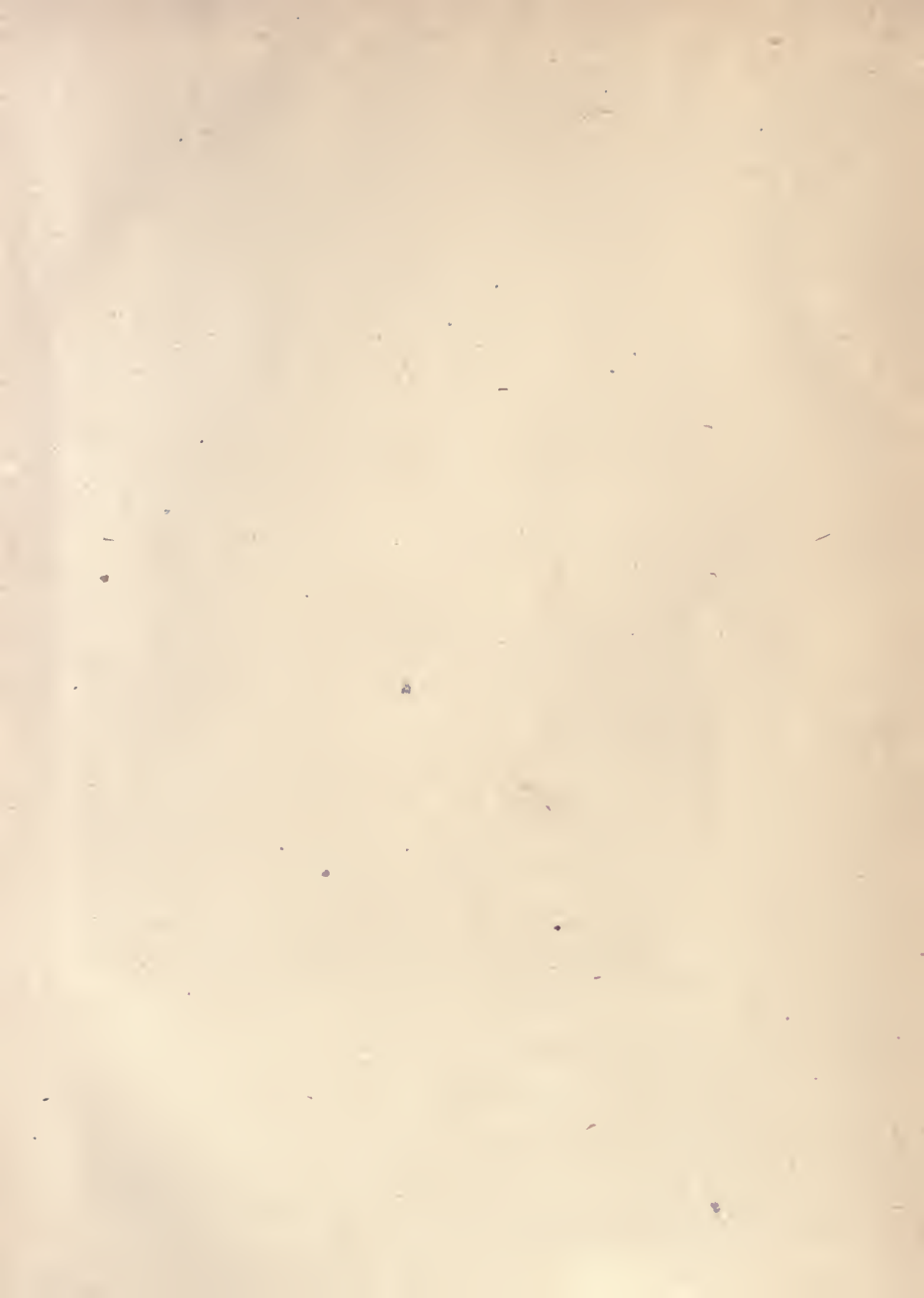
One brief look more at Horace, and we leave
Him and Madaline to live their lives,
In unrecorded, happy usefulness.
Two years have passed since their bright wedding-
day,
And in the halls of Congress, side by side
With Edward Vaughn, sits Horace Hamilton.
Thus, even in these days of Policy,
Sometimes is real merit recognized,
And Virtue, at the last, receives reward.
Reward! "Virtue is its *own* reward"!
How childishly we talk, as if, indeed,
A little outward honor were so great!

And is it not enough, that when we use
Our moral faculties, the exercise
Doth quicken all the life-blood of our souls,
Till all its members thrill with new-born strength?
O, young man of to-day, beware! beware!
Let not your moral nature become dead,
Paralyzed, and dead, from want of use!
Keep well from harm your Conscience, that you
 ne'er
May o'er its corpse, too late, weep your remorse!









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